Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XIX, Issue No. 297 | SATURDAY DECEMBER 12, 2009 | www.saipantribune.com | 50¢

Woman escapes rape attempt in San Antonio. **PAGE 3**

Terminated cook attacks woman inside store. **PAGE 3**

3 masked teens rob store in Kagman III

Storeowner, manager hurt during robbery

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Three male teenagers wearing black ski masks assaulted a businesswoman and her manager with sticks during a robbery at a store in Kagman III Thursday night.

The suspects ran off after getting an undetermined amount of money from CYC Market, according to Department of Public Safety spokesman Eric F. David yesterday.

David said the victims were treated at the scene due to minor injuries.

David said police officers responded to Kagman III Thursday at 11:22pm after receiving a call about a robbery.

Preliminary investigation showed

See MASKED on Page 4

DUE TO SUSPENSION OF CHINA CHARTER FLIGHTS

Up to $2.6M loss for NMI

Immigration, diplomatic woes since federalization remain unresolved

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Charter flights from China have been suspended over immigration and diplomatic concerns since the federal government took over CNMI immigration on Nov. 28. This could cost the CNMI up to $2.6 million in economic activity for each week the charter services remain suspended.

The projected amount of losses is based on an economic impact report prepared by the Marianas Visitors Authority, a copy of which was obtained by *Saipan Tribune* yesterday.

The loss of charter flights comes at a time when the CNMI's tourism indus-

See UP TO on Page 4

Q&A UMBRELLA PERMITS

Question: What will be the function of the CNMI Department of Labor under federalization?

Answer: The CNMI Department of Labor will continue to perform its functions as prescribed by CNMI law except those directly concerned with the process of actual entry into the Commonwealth and the process of actual deportation from the Commonwealth.

With respect to the entry of foreign workers, in the past, the department approved applications for entry that were forwarded to the Division of Immigration for action. The function of allowing entry to the Commonwealth now rests with USCIS.

With respect to the deportation of foreign workers, in the past, the department referred to the Division of Immigration those who did not comply with repatriation orders. The department will continue to assist workers with voluntary repatriation and obtain repatriation tickets from the last employer of record. However, those who do not comply with repatria-

See Q&A on Page 2

OPINION METER

This week's poll:
Is your holiday spending going to increase, remain the same, or decrease this year compared to last year's?

Let your voice be heard!
Go to
www.saipantribune.com
to cast your vote.

PANDEMIC ALERT STATUS
PHASE 6
As of December 11, 2009

Phase 6: The pandemic phase, is an indication that a global pandemic is underway.

For more information about the H1N1 flu, contact DPH at 236-8797, Monday to Friday, from 8am to 5pm, 234-8950 during after hours, e-mail cnmipheoc@gmail.com, or visit www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/.

Source: CNMI Department of Public Health, World Health Organization

INSIDE

Nobel Laureate
Newly enshrined among the world's great peacemakers, President Barack Obama offered a striking defense of war.

WORLD...Page 11

World Premiere
A delighted audience clapped and cheered as the lights came on after the world premiere of "Avatar."

LIFE & STYLE...Page 20

ISLAND CRAFT
Council for Arts and Culture acting director Vince M. Rabauliman shows a curtain made from indigenous materials like coconut leaves, fishing line and bojobo seeds at the Island Artists and Christmas Crafts Exhibit at the Gallery for Arts and Culture on Capital Hill. Artists can still sign up for the Dec. 7 to 31 exhibit, which is free of charge to the public. ***See story on Page 3.***

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Local

Q&A

From Page 1

tion orders will be referred to the federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency for deportation.

With respect to other functions—including approval of applications, requirements with respect to medical expenses and bonding of wages and other expenses, transfers, investigations, hearing of disputes, and revocation of permits—the department will continue to function as it has in the past.

Q: Will the Department of Labor issue any additional umbrella permits?

A: No umbrella permits will be issued after Nov. 27, 2009. The federal law recognizes all CNMI umbrella permits issued through Nov. 27, 2009 and not thereafter.

Q: If a person's name is on a list on the department's Web site as eligible for an umbrella permit, will the department issue it?

A: No umbrella permits will be issued after Nov. 27, 2009.

Q: If a permit was printed for a person, but that person did not pick up the permit for some reason, will the department issue it?

A: No. The printing of permits is different from the issuance of permits. A permit is "issued" when the holder of the permit appears in person on or before Nov. 27, 2009, presents acceptable identification, and signs and dates the permit before a Labor Department staff member who also signs and dates the permit.

Q: What happens to a person who holds a valid permit but who did not pick up an umbrella permit?

A: Any person who held a valid permit on Nov. 27 may stay in the Commonwealth and work until the expiration of that permit.

Q: Did the department issue umbrella permits to any overstayers?

A: The department issued permits to persons who did not have currently valid work permits if they were not on any overstayer list certified to the Immigration Division, filed an application on a form provided by the department at the Administrative Hearing Office, and met the criteria in the Governor's Protocol issued in September 2009.

Q: What about persons who might meet the Governor's Protocol criteria who applied to the Attorney General instead of the Labor Department?

A: Persons on certified overstayer lists were not qualified for an umbrella permit under any circumstances unless they received a waiver from the Immigration Division. Once an overstayer list is published, and opportunity is given for persons named on the list to appear at Labor and clear up their record, the names of all persons who appear are deleted from the list and the names of all persons who do not appear remain on the list. The department certifies quarterly overstayer lists to the Immigration Division. Thereafter, the department will not take action as to an overstayer without a waiver from the Immigration Division. When waivers were granted by the Immigration Division, the department considered these overstayers under the same criteria as overstayers who were not on a certified list.

Q: What happens to the overstayer who did not get an umbrella permit?

A: The CNMI Labor Department will assist overstayers to obtain repatriation tickets from the last employer of record and to depart voluntarily. Under a voluntary repatriation, the person may remain eligible to enter the U.S. in the future if they comply with federal immigration law.

Overstayers who do not comply with voluntary repatriation will be referred to the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency. Only the federal government can deport people. A person who is deported may not be eligible to enter the U.S. in the future.

Q: What is the report-back date on the umbrella permits?

A: The report-back date is the last date on which some necessary action must be taken to keep the umbrella permit in force. For holders of valid work permits, the report-back date is the date on which the work permit expires and a renewal or transfer should be in process. For those whose applications were in process when the umbrella permit was issued, the report-back date is the last date to correct deficiencies or appeal denials. For those with cases or claims, the report-back date is a date by which the matter is expected to be resolved. If the matter is not resolved by that date, a new report-back date will be set. For those who are seeking work, the report-back date is the date by which an employer intent form must be filed.

Q: Are all holders of umbrella permits allowed to register with Employment Services in order to seek work?

A: All holders of umbrella permits may register when they are seeking work except those who hold umbrella permits under a claim of pending case, pending appeal, or pending claim under an administrative order for unpaid wages. Those with pending cases, appeals, and claims

See Q&A on Page 4

Woman escapes rape attempt in San Antonio

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A woman managed to escape from an unidentified man who tried to rape her at knifepoint near a store in San Antonio last week.

Department of Public Safety spokesman Eric F. David said yesterday that the suspect was described as 5'8" tall, medium built, with short hair. The suspect was last seen wearing possibly a gray or blue shirt, a pair of camouflage shorts, and dark flip-flops.

David said police and medics responded and met with the victim on Dec. 3 at 8:24pm after DPS received a call about a sexual assault that happened in front of Well Jin Store.

Officers learned that the victim, a 30-year-old Caucasian, had gone to the Well Jin Store to buy a drink. As she was walking back to her car, the suspect, whom she had earlier seen standing by the stairway of a building, told her she dropped something.

The victim became suspicious because she knew she did not drop anything. The suspect came behind her and pushed her against her vehicle as she was trying to get in.

The suspect held the victim and tried to pull off her pants and shirt. He rubbed a knife on the victim's waistline and cut her blouse and left pocket. The victim tried to fight back when the suspect pointed the knife at her throat. The suspect threatened to kill her if she screams.

The suspect then forced the victim to a dark portion of the building and started touching her private parts. The victim managed to fight back, got inside her car, and drove home. She told her roommates about what happened. Minutes later, they called the police.

The suspect has yet to be arrested as of yesterday.

Ex-cook attacks woman inside store

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A terminated cook allegedly pointed a knife at a woman inside a store in Garapan, beat her up, and threatened to kill her in a manner similar to the recent shooting rampage on the island.

Guo Hui Pan, 45, a Chinese national, was arrested Thursday night in Garapan, for assault with a dangerous weapon, aggravated assault and battery, assault, and assault and battery.

The victim, Yang Song, was treated at the Commonwealth Health Center and then released. The right side of her face was swollen, and she had bruises on the right shoulder, left arm, and other parts of the body. Her right ear has gone deaf due to the attack.

Superior Court associate judge Kenneth Govendo initially imposed a $50,000 cash bail for Pan's temporary liberty. During yesterday's hearing, associate judge Perry Inos changed the bail to $2,500 cash and $22,500 in unsecured bond. Inos also granted Pan's request for a third-party custodian.

Preliminary hearing was set for Dec. 21.

Detective Jackson W. Jack said the attack happened Monday night inside 99 Cents Supermarket.

Jack said that Song was walking near one of the food aisles in the store when Pan, who was intoxicated, approached her, pointed a knife at her, and threatened to kill her for causing his termination.

Song moved back, but Pan allegedly started punching her in the chest. The store's night supervisor noticed the commotion and told the suspect to put away the knife and leave the store.

As Pan was leaving, he allegedly threatened Song if she wants to die "just like those people that got shot" during the recent shooting rampage.

On Nov. 25, Li Zhong Ren, a Chinese national, went on a shooting rampage, killing four persons in Kannat Tabla and injuring one child. He proceeded to Marpi where he shot and injured seven tourists before shooting himself under the chin.

Commerce creates FAQs for foreign students and retirees

The Department of Commerce said it has created FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) for foreign investors, foreign retirees and foreign students. The FAQs may be accessed on Commerce's Web site at http://www.commerce.gov.mp.

After Nov. 28, 2009, the extent of Commerce's role with respect to foreign investors, retirees and students is limited to monitoring for compliance all CNMI permits issued under Commerce through Nov. 27, 2011.

CNMI permit holders under these three categories should note that they could convert to an appropriate U.S. visa any time prior to the expiration of their CNMI permits.

For more information on the requirements of U.S. Visas regarding foreign investors and students, visit the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Web site at http://www.uscis.gov, or the U.S. Immigration and Custom Enforcement Web site http://www.ice.gov and follow the link to SEVP (Student and Exchange Visitor Program) http://www.ice.gov/sevis/index.htm

For more information, visit the Commerce Web site or call 664-3018. ***(DOC)***

Christmas exhibit opens

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Council for Arts and Culture opened Monday the traditional Island Artists and Christmas Craft Exhibit, with over a hundred crafts and visual arts from 10 participating artists on display at the Capital Hill gallery.

Lucille T. Ayuyu, the Arts Council coordinator, said more displays are expected within the month after they decided to keep the free registration open until Dec. 31 for artists who still want to join the monthlong exhibit.

The exhibit features a range of products, from small souvenir items priced at $3 each, to visual art displays that cost $300.

Among the crowd drawers in yesterday exhibit were the works of artists Robert Hunter, Xiao Ping, and Keli Tenorio. The photographs by Jack Hardy and Mark Robertson were also getting favorable feedback, along with the entries of traditional artists Manuel Bermudes, Flowerpot Salas, Gordon Salas, Kate Winslet, and Priscilla Pangelinan.

Ayuyu said they kept the opening ceremony simple, with just the department's staff and guests in attendance. A light refreshment was also provided to the exhibit's first visitors.

CAAC said it will work with private and public schools to make the event successful this year. Arts and crafts demonstration could also be provided to visiting children, Ayuyu said.

Previous years' exhibits generated low turnouts, mainly because of the distant location of the gallery from the island's main tourist district. Ayuyu said some of the island's talents are also off-island, seeking a better place to market their output, hence the low participation of artists this year.

Arts Council acting executive director Vince Rabauliman said the council is still reviewing plans of relocating the site to Garapan. "We're working on it. We're hoping to see our new gallery in the next years," he said.

CCAC officials are optimistic that the exhibit will draw a greater number of participants in coming weeks as the free registration is open to all island artists, regardless of age.

The exhibit aims to help local artists display and promote their artworks and find suitable markets for their products. CCAC does not charge the artists anything and all proceeds from the sale of items go to the artists themselves.

Every year, the Arts Council sponsors three major exhibits: the Women's Exhibit in March, the Pacifica Arts and Cultural Exhibit in September, and the Island Artist and Christmas Craft Exhibit in December.

ACCESSORIES
Take 25% off all accessories
(including Bluetooth headsets and memory cards)
CLUB RED MEMBERS
Take 30% off all accessories
(including Bluetooth headsets and memory cards)
Gift Card $10
Gift Card $20
Gift Card $50
NTT docomo DOCOMO PACIFIC
NTT docomo DOCOMO PACIFIC
483-CARE | www.docomopacific.com | Typhoon-Proven
Gualo Rai, Middle Road • Mita Travel, Garapan

MASKED

From Page 1

that the CYC Market owner, a certain Mrs. Ayuyu, was about to close the store when three masked persons, believed to be teenagers, rushed into the store and demanded money from her.

One suspect ran behind the counter and hit Mrs. Ayuyu's back with a stick, causing her to fall to the floor.

The suspect took all the money from the cash register then ran outside, leaving his two companions inside the establishment.

Later, the store manager, a certain Mr. Zheng, came out from the back room and saw Mrs. Ayuyu on the floor behind the cash register.

Mrs. Ayuyu informed Zheng about the robbery and told him two more suspects were still inside the store.

When Zheng searched the premises, he saw the two robbers. The suspects, however, ran toward him and hit him with sticks, then fled the scene.

On Dec. 31, 2008, two masked men also robbed the CYC Store's branch in San Vicente. One of the suspects hit the store's maintenance worker's chest with a blunt object. The worker was injured.

The suspects fled on foot with an undetermined amount of money and store merchandise. The case remains unsolved.

UP TO

From Page 1

try is already reeling from global economic recession, with visitor arrivals plunging by 31 percent, from 29,611 in October last year to 20,267 during the same month this year.

Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, in recognizing that some unique situations would result as the CNMI transitions to U.S. immigration laws, announced on Oct. 21 the granting of parole to eligible Chinese and Russian nationals visiting the CNMI for business or tourism.

But since Nov. 28, no charter flights from China have arrived in the CNMI because of immigration and diplomatic concerns that have yet to be resolved.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers took over immigration processing at the Saipan and Rota international airports.

To MVA's understanding, the U.S. State Department issued a diplomatic note to the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Beijing, announcing that Chinese nationals can exit their country and board a plane bound for the CNMI.

"We do not exactly know the content of the note but assume that it included such a message after sharing the Chinese exit controls requirements with our U.S. CBP partners. Absent this note making it through the bureaucracy and to the PRC's Exit and Entry Administration under the Ministry of Public Security, charter flights from China have been suspended indefinitely until the exit issue for Chinese nationals is resolved," MVA said in its report dated Dec. 1.

MVA, the CNMI government's tourism agency, said as it understands, this lack of authority to leave China is having a negative impact on Chinese visitors to the CNMI coming through Seoul, South Korea.

As of yesterday, it was not clear when the U.S. Department of Homeland Security formally notified the U.S. State Department of the parole program so that the latter could notify the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs that Chinese nationals can still enter the CNMI under the parole program.

Eligible Russian tourists have continued to arrive in the CNMI after Nov. 28, when U.S. Public Law 110-229 or the federalization law came into effect.

Saipan Tribune tried yesterday to get a comment from DHS immigration policy adviser Alexander Y. Hartman, CBP public affairs liaison Edward H. Low, and DHS-U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services regional media manager Marie Thérèse Sebrechts about the matter.

Sebrechts said the program is handled by CBP, and therefore deferred to DHS and CBP.

Up to 834 passengers a week

The charter flights from the Chinese cities of Shanghai and Guangzhou bring in a maximum of 834 passengers every week.

Shanghai Airlines, which uses a Boeing 767 aircraft, has a seating capacity of 222. Because it flies twice weekly to the CNMI, it brings up to 444 passengers every week.

China Southern, which uses a 195-seater Boeing 757 aircraft, can bring in a maximum of 390 passengers for two flights every week.

MVA looked at the direct and indirect impacts the suspension of charter flights have on the CNMI economy if the load factor is anywhere between 70 percent and 100 percent, including hotel revenue, on island expenditure, multiplier effect, business gross revenue tax, and hotel tax.

Based on the MVA report, if the load factor is 100 percent with 834 passengers, the total fiscal impact on the CNMI economy every week could be $2,637,547.

If the load factor is only 95 percent with 713 passengers, the total fiscal impact every week could be as $2,505,670.

If the load factor is between 75 percent and 90 percent, the total fiscal impact could be anywhere from $1,150,103 to $2,255,103.

With a 70 percent load factor with 255 passengers, the loss to the CNMI could be $805,072 every week.

"The CNMI stands to lose a maximum of approximately $2.6 million in economic activity for each week the charter services from China are suspended," MVA said.

Of equal concern, MVA said, is that 73 percent of the seats are allocated to the Tinian Dynasty Holidays, an affiliate of Hong Kong Overseas Entertainment, doing business as Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino, while the rest is allocated to Century Tours.

"In this regard, the economic impact will be felt most on the island of Tinian," said MVA.

Timely notification

David Sablan, president of Century Tours, when asked for comment yesterday, said the Shanghai Airlines flights alone bring in passengers from China to the CNMI every Tuesday and Saturday at 1:30am. Each flight has a seat capacity of 222, for a total of 444 every week.

"We're positioning ourselves to resume on Dec. 19," he said, but there's no guarantee the immigration and diplomatic concerns could be resolved that date.

He said in his opinion, it is the responsibility of DHS to timely notify the State Department about the parole program, and the State Department, in turn, should timely notify the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Beijing.

Airlines, he said, should also be responsible for securing proper and complete documentation to be able to bring in passengers from China.

"Apparently, that's part of the problem but the biggest problem, apparently, is that immigration people in Shanghai were not made aware that the CNMI visitors entry permit is no longer valid," he said.

MVA said absent the current availability of important information to conduct its economic impact report, they used variables available to the agency and from its comments on USCBP -2009-0001 (Interim Final Rule) as submitted to DHS in February 2009.

"Additionally, this takes into consideration the current charter seat capacity from Shanghai (767 with a 222 seats) and Guangzhou (757 with 195 seats), which comes twice weekly," MVA added.

Parole provisions

To be eligible for the parole provision, Chinese and Russian tourists should be entering and staying in the CNMI for only up to 45 days, and should be in possession of a roundtrip ticket that is nonrefundable, nontransferable, and bears a confirmed departure date not exceeding 45 days from the date of entry to the CNMI, CBP earlier said.

They should also be in possession of a completed and signed Guam-CNMI Visa Waiver Information form, or the CBP Form I-736.

Chinese and Russian tourists are also required to be in possession of a completed CBP Form I-94, or the arrival-departure record, as well as a valid unexpired ICAO-compliant, machine readable passport. ICAO stands for International Civil Aviation Organization.

"Parole will be authorized only for entry into the CNMI and will not extend to other areas of the United States," CBP said.

New security features have also been in place for all travelers entering the CNMI, including Chinese and Russian tourists, like a notice of entry to CBP before the flight takes off; vetting of the passengers on a security watch list before entry; and compliance with strict exit controls upon departure from the CNMI.

The parole program does not apply to Russian and Chinese tourists visiting Guam.

For carriers to be eligible to transport eligible Russian and Chinese tourists, they should already be signatory to the Guam-CNMI Visa Waiver Program. Carriers are also responsible for ensuring that travelers meet the eligibility requirements for the CNMI-only parole, CBP said.

Carriers that are not currently signatories are required to complete CBP Form I-760 and initiate the process with CBP no later than Nov. 23, to be eligible by the Nov. 28 implementation date.

Q&A

From Page 2

may be authorized to seek temporary work, but when the case, appeal, or claim is completed, the basis for remaining in the Commonwealth may end. Those who have unpaid wage claims that are determined by the Attorney General to be uncollectible may register to seek permission to transfer to a new employer.

Q: When are those who hold umbrella permits and are seeking work required to register with Employment Services?

A: Anyone holding an umbrella permit and seeking work who has already registered with Employment Services is not required to re-register unless ordered to do so by a Hearing officer. An Employer Intent Form must be filed before the report-back date.

Anyone holding an umbrella permit and seeking work who has not yet registered with Employment Services must register before the report-back date on their umbrella permit and file an Employer Intent Form before the report-back date.

Q: How will the temporary handwritten umbrella permits be handled?

A: Temporary permits were issued in some cases because the computer system did not have a sufficient photo image or there was some other problem with the record from which the umbrella permits were printed. Temporary permits all carry a report-back date of January 15, 2009. From December 15, 2009 through January 15, 2009, the holders of temporary permits may report to Labor Processing to pick up their permanent permit with their picture on it. Those who have no photos on file will be asked to supply a passport-sized photo.

Q: Is an employer allowed to renew a worker who has an umbrella permit?

A: Yes, if a worker has an umbrella permit, the worker can be renewed under the department's normal processes.

Q: Is an employer allowed to renew a worker who does not have an umbrella permit but still has a valid work permit?

A: A worker without an umbrella permit can be renewed if the worker has time left on his or her regular work permit. So, for example, if the application was filed by the employer in December 2009, and the worker's permit does not expire until June 2010, then the worker can be renewed for the period until the worker's permit expires in June 2010.

Q: Is an employer allowed to renew a worker who does not have an umbrella permit and does not have a valid work permit?

A: Yes, but only if the application was filed by the employer on or before November 27, 2009 and was in process on November 27, 2009. If the worker's permit expired but the worker was still eligible to be renewed under normal department processes, then the renewal filed on or before November 27 will proceed as usual. The worker will get whatever period of time the employer applied and paid for (one year, two years, etc.)

Q: Is a worker allowed to transfer to a new employer if the worker has an umbrella permit?

A: Yes, under the department's normal processes.

Q: Is a worker allowed to transfer if the worker does not have an umbrella permit?

A: A worker without an umbrella permit can transfer if the worker has time left on his or her regular work permit. So, for example, if the application was filed by the employer in December 2009, and the worker's permit does not expire until June 2010, then the worker can transfer and work until the worker's permit expires in June 2010. In addition, if the employer's application with respect to the worker was in process on November 27, the worker will be allowed to transfer for whatever period the employer applied and paid for.

Q: Is an employer allowed to employ a worker under a transfer if the worker does not have an umbrella permit and does not have a valid work permit?

A: Yes, but only if the application was filed by the employer and there was a conditional grant of transfer on or before November 27, 2009. The worker will get whatever period of time the employer applied for (one year, two years, etc.)

Q: When will the department start issuing plastic cards again?

A: On December 15, 2009, after all of the records for the umbrella permit process have been put into the department's computer system.

Q: Where do IRs report for their annual registration now that the Immigration Division is gone?

A: Immediate relatives of U.S. citizens register with the Office of the Attorney General. Immediate relatives of aliens register with the Department of Labor.

Q: What about 240P permits and refugees?

A: The Attorney General handles those matters.

Q: Who revokes umbrella permits?

A: An umbrella permit issued by the Labor Department will be revoked, if necessary, by the Labor Department. An umbrella permit issued by the Commerce Department will be revoked, if necessary, by the Commerce Department. An umbrella permit issued by the Immigration Division will be revoked, if necessary, by the Office of the Attorney General, except for umbrella permits issued to immediate relatives of aliens, which will be handled by the Labor Department.

The department will follow the same process it uses for revoking any permit. The Director of Labor will petition the Hearing Office to revoke the permit. The Hearing Office will hold a hearing to determine whether the permit should be revoked. A Hearing Officer will issue an order either revoking the permit or leaving it in force. Thereafter, parties will have an opportunity to appeal to the Secretary, and a further judicial review in the Commonwealth Superior Court.

Q: What happens to workers whose appeals are decided after they get their umbrella permits?

A: The umbrella permit allows a worker to stay and pursue an appeal. If the appeal is successful, then the umbrella permit remains in effect and the order will allow the worker to re-register and pursue a transfer. If the appeal is denied, then the order will deal with the umbrella permit.

Q: What happens to workers whose cases are decided after they get their umbrella permits?

A: The umbrella permit allows a worker to stay and pursue a case. If the case is successful, then the umbrella permit remains in effect. If the hearing officer dismisses the claims or finds against the worker, the order will deal with the umbrella permit.

Q: What data will be issued about the umbrella permit program?

A: Data on the umbrella permit program will be available after the Department reconciles its digital records. The data will be available in the Department's year-end annual report to the Legislature.

Source: CNMI Department of Labor

NEWS BRIEFS

USS Houston arrives today

The USS *Houston*, a 362-foot Los Angeles-class submarine with approximately 110 officers and crew, will be arriving today, Dec. 12, on a repeat visit to the Commonwealth.

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce is urging the entire community to help continue to build the CNMI's reputation as the preferred MWR (Morale, Welfare, and Recreation) destination in the Asia-Pacific Region by warmly welcoming these sailors to the islands. The *Houston* is scheduled to depart in the middle of next week. ***(PR)***

Flores congratulates Fitial and Inos

Saipan Mayor-elect Donald P. Flores believes that it is now time for the people of the Commonwealth to set aside their differences and to unite and help Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, Lt. Gov Eloy S. Inos, and the new Legislature in their efforts to bring prosperity to the islands.

Flores

Flores says the Saipan Mayor's Office, under his charge, will work closely with the Fitial administration and the Legislature to ensure that essential public and community services are delivered in the best possible manner with available resources. The Mayor-elect sends his congratulations to Fitial and Enos for their victory in the recent CNMI gubernatorial runoff election. ***(PR)***

An invitation to a recital

Keynotes School of Music is inviting the public to musical recital titled "Christmas in Saipan" presented by the students and teachers of the music school. The free admission recital will be held on Dec. 13, 2009, 3pm - 7pm at Multi-Purpose Center, Susupe, Saipan. The recital will be composed of two parts: Part A, 3pm to 5pm, will feature beginner students, and Part B, 5:30pm to 7pm will feature intermediate and advance students. Please come and enjoy a musical treat from Keynotes School of Music! ***(PR)***

Veterans' briefing set

Tina San Augustine, the Department of Veterans Affairs public contact and outreach specialist for Guam and the CNMI, will be on Saipan on Dec. 14-18, 2009, for a veterans outreach on veterans' federal benefits.

David Sheridan, vocational rehabilitation counselor, and Gaylene Matsunaga, home loan technician, also from the VA, will also be on Saipan on Dec. 15 and 16, to discuss veterans' needs on the VA home loan and vocational rehab.

- Rota: Dec. 17-18, 8am to 4pm, at the Rota Mayor's Office conference room
- Saipan: Dec. 15-16, 8am to 4pm, at the Office of Military/Veterans Affairs Office on Capital Hill.
- Tinian: Dec. 14, 9am to 4pm, at the Tinian Mayor's Office

For more information, call Ruth Coleman at the Office of Military/Veterans Affairs at 664-2650. ***(PR)***

SSHS sets report card issuance

Parents and legal guardians of Saipan Southern High School students are being informed that the Mid-Progress Report is scheduled to be picked up on Friday, Dec. 18, 2009, from 3pm to 6pm. Teachers will be available in their classrooms for parental visit. All students will be released at 1pm. ***(PR)***

US Navy to training exercises on FDM

The U.S. Navy will conduct missile and laser training exercises on the island of Farallon de Medinilla from 2pm to 6pm on Dec. 17. The general location of this activity will be on the island of Farallon de Medinilla Training Area on a 10 nautical mile radius on all quadrants. The general public are advised to stay clear from this area during the times and date indicated. ***(PR)***

Pesticide safety workshop on Rota

The Pesticide Safety and Education Program will conduct a workshop for farmers on Dec. 15-18, 2009, from 8am to 4pm at the Rota campus of the Northern Marianas College.

The pesticide workshop is primarily intended for commercial and private farmers and will focus on the principles of pest control, insect biology, environmental concerns, loading and handling, labeling, math calibration and DEQ regulations.

Participants must attend the complete training course and pass the Pesticide safety examination and have Pesticide Safety and Education Program license in order to purchase and use the restricted use pesticides.

For more information, contact NMC-CREES: Arnold Route at 234-5498 Ext: 1432, Sid Cabrera at 234- 5498 or DEQ's Reina Camacho at 664-8522. ***(PR)***

USVI gets $900K for urgent waste, wastewater needs

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Department of the Interior's Insular Assistant Secretary Tony Babauta signed a $900,000 grant to repair the Mon Bijou Collection System on St. Croix. The project will replace 3,000 linear feet of concrete and ductile pipe which will help prevent flooding and reduce public health risks for residents served by the Mon Bijou System.

"For some time, the U.S. Virgin Islands has been under a consent order to improve its wastewater system and I am pleased to have funding in our Water and Wastewater program to assist Governor John deJongh address these needed improvements," said Mr. Babauta. "I am also grateful to be able to work closely with Congresswoman Donna Christensen who ensured that funding for the Water and Wastewater program was increased to ensure this project for St. Croix moved forward." ***(DOI)***

"Helping you to remain independent"
Currently accepting medicare, medicaid, and most private insurance. Ask your doctor today about a PHHC referral, or call PHHC at:
670-234-CARE
PACIFIC HOME HEALTH CARE

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XIX, Issue No. 297

Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
Mark Rabago ASSISTANT EDITOR

MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Curbing carbon

At the Copenhagen climate conference on Wednesday, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa P. Jackson declared 2009 to be when the U.S. government finally began to seriously address greenhouse gas emissions. The reason? Her formal finding on Monday that carbon emissions pose a danger to the health and welfare of Americans, a step toward restricting the sources that produce them. Democrats and environmental groups immediately lauded the decision, while Republicans and business groups condemned it, arguing that it would lead to complicated, productivity-killing regulation.

Critics are correct to point out that EPA regulation under the Clean Air Act isn't the most efficient way to clamp down on carbon emissions, absent broader congressional action. EPA officials would regulate source by source, with lawsuits slowing the process and technological hurdles likely constraining action—or making it very expensive. But that only strengthens the argument for a sensible, overarching, market-based carbon tax or cap-and-trade scheme—which is probably the most efficient way to reduce greenhouse emissions. Putting a gradually increasing price on carbon would spur the market to determine the least costly way to reduce America's carbon emissions, instead of allowing the EPA to regulate alone and piecemeal or Congress to pick winners and losers according to lawmakers' political calculations. Republicans, however, have generally opposed these market-based ideas, too.

Monday's announcement was most encouraging for two reasons. First, it lends plausibility to the preliminary emissions-reduction commitment that President Obama announced before the Copenhagen climate conference, a figure that the Senate has not endorsed. Second, it pressures lawmakers to offer a better alternative to EPA regulation alone. In part because the GOP has not embraced a sensible, market-based approach, the House passed a huge and flawed climate bill over the summer. The Senate is lost in the health-care debate, its members don't seem particularly eager to take up climate change when health care is done, and its version of the legislation isn't shaping up to be much better than the House's. The threat of the EPA regulating in Congress' stead should persuade lawmakers to look at climate-change afresh.

(c) 2009, The Washington Post

Paying the price of bin Laden's freedom

By JOHN KERRY
Special to the Los Angeles Times

Sen. John F. Kerry, D-Mass., is chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Eight years ago this month, Osama bin Laden walked out of the Tora Bora mountains in Afghanistan and disappeared into Pakistan. U.S. intelligence agencies have no real idea where he is today, but it is clear that the world's most wanted man and the terrorist organization he leads have re-emerged as a powerful force behind the increasingly deadly insurgencies in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Three senior Obama administration officials warned last week that al-Qaida is more dangerous than at any time in the past 18 months. They gave the Senate Foreign Relations Committee a frightening bill of particulars: Al-Qaida is providing training and resources for militants attacking U.S. troops in Afghanistan, assisting suicide bombers in Pakistan and helping extremists plot new attacks on India. U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton described bin Laden's al-Qaida as a "syndicate of terrorism." Underscoring the danger, she said the terrorists are seeking nuclear weapons.

If we had captured or killed bin Laden, the world would look very different today. His death or imprisonment would not have eliminated the worldwide extremist threat, but our failure to finish the job represents a lost opportunity that altered the course of the conflict in Afghanistan and the future of international terrorism. It left the American people more vulnerable, and it inflamed the strife that now threatens to engulf Pakistan and Afghanistan.

History is filled with examples demonstrating that terrorist organizations are invariably much stronger with their charismatic leaders than without them. The capture of Abdullah Ocalan in 1999 weakened the Kurdistan Workers Party in Turkey, and the imprisonment of Abimael Guzman in 1992 had a similar effect on Peru's Shining Path.

The failure to get bin Laden was not inevitable. By early December 2001, he and his deputy, Ayman al-Zawahri, were cornered in a complex of caves and tunnels carved into the rugged terrain of eastern Afghanistan, just a few miles from the border with Pakistan. They endured days of relentless bombing by U.S. aircraft, and bin Laden clearly expected to be overrun any day by American troops and their Afghan allies. According to Steve Coll's excellent book on the bin Laden family, the al-Qaida leader wrote his will Dec. 14.

As a recent report by the majority staff of the Foreign Relations Committee made clear, there is no longer any dispute over whether bin Laden was at Tora Bora. CIA and Delta Force commanders on the scene told the staff that he was there and described intercepting his voice on radio communications. Most authoritatively, bin Laden's presence was confirmed by the official history of the U.S. Special Operations Command, which oversees Delta Force, the Green Berets, Navy SEALs and similar special forces. "All source reporting corroborated his presence on several days from 9-14 December," said the unclassified version of the history, which was published with little notice in 2007.

The final assault that bin Laden feared never came. Fewer than 100 U.S. special operations commandos were at Tora Bora, not enough to defeat the entrenched al-Qaida fighters. Calls for reinforcements were rejected. So were requests for U.S. troops to block the exit routes to sanctuary in Pakistan a few miles away. The vast array of U.S. military power was kept on the sidelines by senior commanders who entrusted one of the primary objectives of the war to airstrikes and unreliable Afghan and Pakistani allies.

Military analysts estimate it would have taken only 2,000 or so American troops to accomplish the mission. Most would have been deployed on the southern side of Tora Bora to block escape routes to Pakistan. About 500 would have carried out the final assault from the north. We had enough troops in or near Afghanistan at the time, and they were trained for this type of unconventional fight in rugged terrain.

More than 1,000 members of two Marine expeditionary units were not far away in Kandahar, but their commander's request to move to Tora Bora to encircle bin Laden was rejected. Roughly the same number of troops from the Army's 10th Mountain Division was split between southern Uzbekistan and Bagram air base, a short helicopter ride from Tora Bora. Instead, Gen. Tommy Franks left the job to a motley collection of Afghan militiamen and Pakistani Frontier Corps paramilitary fighters who never showed up.

Franks and his boss, U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, were determined to succeed in Afghanistan with a light footprint. They justified limiting the number of U.S. troops by saying they wanted to avoid stirring up anti-American sentiment and creating a protracted insurgency. Unfortunately, in failing to get bin Laden, we wound up with exactly what we had hoped to avoid in Afghanistan—and a virulent insurgency across the border in Pakistan, a nuclear-armed ally.

Getting bin Laden at Tora Bora would have been dangerous, and success was not guaranteed. Failing to try meant we had no chance for success. Our men and women in uniform have been paying the price for eight years and, as 30,000 more of them are preparing to finish the job, we must all remember that we can't ensure our national security by turning our backs on enemies who have sworn to destroy us.

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

A massacre in Mindanao

By W. SCOTT THOMPSON
Special to the Los Angeles Times

Thompson, professor emeritus of international politics at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, is an expert on Southeast Asia who lives in Bali and Manila.

MANILA, Philippines—There's a tendency for eyes to glaze over when reports of violence in the Philippines are reported. "Sorry for the redundancy," we say. But the Nov. 23 massacre of 57 people merits consideration. The victims were supporters and local journalists accompanying a woman on her way to file nomination papers for her husband's run for provincial governor on the southern Philippine island of Mindanao. The candidate had reportedly received death threats, and some authorities called this a politically motivated attack. The provincial governor and his son, leaders of the Ampatuan clan, are among those held in the case.

Why was such an attack possible?

There are three reasons. First, the culture of impunity wherever President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo is involved. Second, the culture of rido, or clan feuds, in Mindanao, and third, defects in the Filipino judicial system.

It is almost unbelievable, but a presidential spokesperson all but whitewashed the massacre in a news conference. The Ampatuan clan, Arroyo's chief ally in Mindanao, was instrumental in helping her gain the "1 million" vote majority that she demanded of her election commissioner in the 2004 election. It is Mindanao where vote swings occur; the government can even decide which vote-laden planes can land, former government officials who asked not to be identified by name have told me.

The deputy press spokesperson said that she didn't think "the president's friendship with the Ampatuans will be severed." She further said that "just because they're in this situation doesn't mean we will turn our backs on them." She explained that Arroyo, in her role as chief executive, acts separately from her role in sustaining political alliances, and thus she could still be "friends" with the family even if "they indeed committed the crime."

Of course, once reality set in and there was a huge international outcry, Arroyo had to take at least cosmetic steps to separate herself from her Ampatuan allies (ousting them from her political party, a meaningless gesture).

That is a sufficient explanation of the massacre: The Ampatuans assumed they could get away with it, given the 16 leadership positions they hold on the huge island, including two governorships.

A Pulse Asia survey in 2007 found Arroyo to be the most corrupt president in Filipino history. They're wrong; Ferdinand Marcos, who reportedly looted up to $30 billion, was worse, but then we're talking about perceptions with Arroyo. The ZTE case, involving a broadband contract with a Chinese company in which Arroyo's husband and others reportedly sought a 130 percent kickback for friends and his family, is the kind of corruption on people's minds. The usual cut in past foreign investments has been 20 percent. An insider said in a not-for-attribution interview that, in prosecuting the case, government officials were merely trying to "limit the greed" of the first family. Indeed.

The second factor in this massacre is rido, or clan-based violence. A study published by the Asia Foundation and conducted by Moctar I. Matuan of Mindanao State University-Marawi found that in 337 rido cases from 1994 to 2004, 798 people died and 104 were injured. Although 82 cases were filed in court, only eight assailants were imprisoned. "Not a single rido was settled by the Philippine justice system," he said.

Why was such an attack possible? There are three reasons. First, the culture of impunity wherever President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo is involved. Second, the culture of rido, or clan feuds, in Mindanao, and third, defects in the Filipino judicial system.

In southern Mindanao, if you are in power, you've got both guns and patronage. Even the backhoe used to dig the trench in which the bodies were found had the name of Gov. Andal Ampatuan, the clan patriarch, on it.

Third, the judicial system as a whole shares the blame. It's slow enough even under a reformist president trying to clean up the police and courts, as in the 1990s under Fidel V. Ramos. But the standards set at Malacanang Palace then at least slowed down violence and ended extrajudicial killings by presidential hirelings. Ramos was succeeded by a buffoon, the actor Joseph "Erap" Estrada, whose ouster was in part the result of a brutal killing of an adviser to his opponents. During Arroyo's presidency, more than 1,000 killings and abductions of nongovernmental organization workers and journalists have occurred, according to one United Nations report. It's rather hard to stand up for order and justice when things like that happen—and could not have happened, it appears, without a blessing from on high.

The corruption spills down to the lowest levels, and I speak from personal experience. A group of six men broke into my house up to 20 times over a one-year period and stole my car and credit cards. A provincial court found nothing wrong with this, but finally, after more than two years and a long appeal, the Department of Justice decided that there was something wrong.

These men have finally been charged. None of them has shown any contrition. At least two have justified their alleged crimes on the basis that I am not a Filipino and therefore justice does not apply.

At one point, an older official, who was examining my complaint on one of the break-ins, said, "This will take 10,000 pesos, and I can't guarantee that we won't need more as it goes up the system." That's about $210—just to get him to consider the case. Happily, the younger officials are more idealistic—and none I've encountered was interested in bribes.

What is needed in the Philippines is a truly clean sweep. That is why the whole political system has been focused on Arroyo's attempts—by any means—to stay in office past her "elected" term ending in June. But it should have been focused on abuse throughout the Philippines. The Mindanao massacre wouldn't have happened had the chief executive been doing her job. Rido is just a symptom of a system where abuse starts at the top.

A not so Nobel effort

By SCOTT MACLEOD
SPECIAL TO THE LOS ANGELES TIMES

CAIRO—The Nobel Peace Prize that President Barack Obama received in Oslo on Thursday seems to many in the Middle East like a cruel hoax.

In June, Egyptians cheered him for pledging an intense personal effort to resolve the region's problems through negotiations rather than force, and his outreach to the Muslim world was surely on the mind of the Nobel committee when it made the award. In the last three months, however, the Obama administration has steadily undone the president's initial positive moves by seriously mishandling one of the Middle East's central issues: the Israeli-Palestinian dispute.

Simply put, the administration has severely and perhaps fatally undermined Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas. By all accounts, the Palestinian Authority—and its moderate leader, an architect of the 1993 Oslo accord—is essential to a negotiated outcome of the long conflict. It is true that Abbas works in the shadow of his late predecessor, Yasser Arafat, and he has been unable to reverse the gains made by the rival Palestinian group Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip. But the Obama administration hasn't helped: White House aides dragged Abbas like a stooge to a hollow summit with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, then leaned on him to downplay a U.N. report that cited possible Israeli war crimes during the Gaza war. Worst of all, Obama backed away from supporting a key Palestinian Authority position: an insistence on a total freeze of Jewish settlements. Soon, the humiliated Abbas announced that he would not seek another term in office. Ploy or not, the threat reflects the further decline of Abbas' domestic credibility.

The episode also illustrates the pervasive lack of empathy that blinds U.S. policymakers to the history, culture and politics that drive Arab attitudes and decisions. Obama's mishandling of Abbas fits a familiar pattern in which Palestinian leaders and Palestinian rights are reflexively downplayed or disregarded in American calculations.

Looking back, President George H.W. Bush commendably convened the Madrid, Spain, peace conference in 1991. But he excluded Arafat and his Palestine Liberation Organization, then a 27-year-old organization and a central party to the conflict. Predictably, the Madrid talks faltered. The irony was that before long, the Clinton administration would embrace Arafat once Israeli leaders determined he was, in fact, a worthy peace partner.

In signing the Oslo accord, Arafat made a significant concession that infuriated many Palestinians. He surrendered Palestinian claims to 78 percent of the territory that had become the state of Israel in 1948. President Bill Clinton then further undercut Arafat's political standing among his people, as well as his faith in negotiations, by failing to hold Israel accountable for violations of the Oslo accord. Indeed, the Clinton administration failed to adequately hold either side accountable.

Reduced to crisis management, Clinton disastrously misjudged Arafat when he convened the Camp David summit in 2000, hoping to broker a historic end-of-conflict agreement. Arafat told Clinton that that ambition was premature because negotiators had still scarcely begun to grapple with the hardest issues of the dispute. Clinton sided with then-Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, who had proposed the summit largely as a dramatic gambit to keep his fraying coalition government together. Finally, Clinton blamed Arafat rather than himself or Barak for the summit's failure. Palestinians responded by launching a bloody intifada.

Palestinians are hardly blameless. Barbarous acts of terrorism have shaped and reinforced America's largely negative understanding of the Palestinian cause. Yet there is scant effort in the United States to examine the traumatic history that makes Palestinian peacemakers wary of Israeli intentions, frustrated by America's blanket support for Israel and vulnerable to Arab cries of treason.

The empathy deficit has contributed to a flawed policy framework in which Palestinian interests and demands are automatically questioned or marginalized. The U.S. failed to publicly support the Palestinian demand for statehood until 2002—54 years after Israel's independence. U.S. officials still resist Palestinian demands for a full end to Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. U.S. officials have been equally dismissive of Palestinian positions on other profound issues, such as the right of return for refugees to former homes in Israel. Compromises must and can be found on such issues, but U.S. officials have utterly failed to develop or engineer them.

A devastating critique of U.S. Mideast policy by the U.S. Institute of Peace in 2008 cited "an alarming pattern of misman-aged diplomacy." Co-authored by Daniel Kurtzer, former U.S. ambassador to Egypt and Israel and now a Princeton University professor, the report criticized the lack of "cross-cultural expertise"-- a good understanding of the Arabs, in other words. "In truth," recalled former U.S. State Department official Aaron David Miller, in his book, "The Much Too Promised Land," "not a single senior-level official involved with the negotiations was willing or able to present, let alone fight for, the Arab or Palestinian perspective."

It ought to be a scandal that 18 years after the Madrid peace conference, the U.S. has nothing to show for its diplomacy. The festering dispute continues to take human life, radicalize the Muslim world, undermine regional development and threaten a wider and potentially apocalyptic conflict. When Arafat died in 2004, the George W. Bush administration hailed his successor, Abbas, as a more peaceful and compliant Palestinian leader. Yet, displaying half-heartedness toward peace negotiations while tolerating Israel's separation "wall" and the spread of its illegal settlements, it didn't get any further with him than it (or the Clinton administration) had with Arafat.

To effectively encourage the parties to reach a fair and just agreement acceptable to a majority of Israelis and Palestinians, Obama needs to show leadership and become an honest broker. That must include an effort to finally understand the world as Palestinians experience it. Dismissing Palestinian rights—and taking Palestinian peace partners such as Abbas for granted—is a certain path to further failure. The Middle East is expecting more from the recipient of the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize.

MacLeod has covered the Mideast for Time *magazine since 1995.*

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲86° ▼77°	▲86° ▼77°	▲86° ▼77°	▲86° ▼77°	▲86° ▼77°

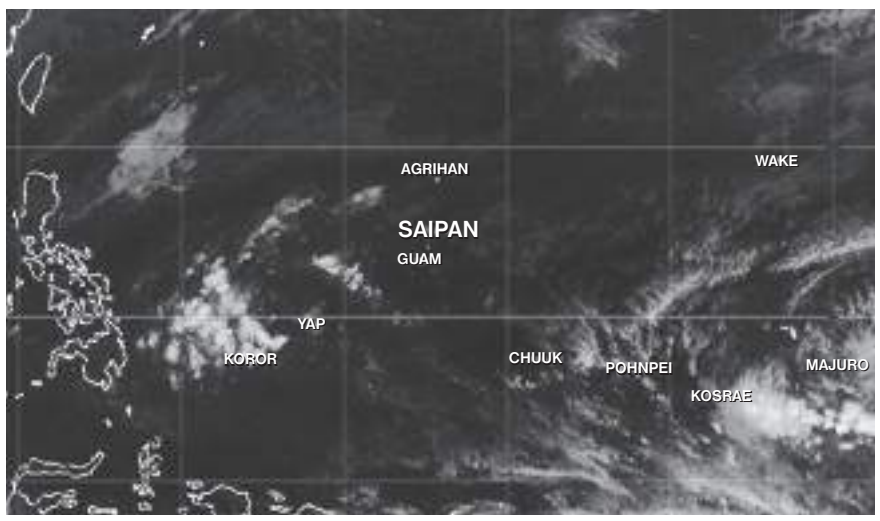
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Sunny	▲83	▼75
Palau	Showers	▲86	▼77
Yap	Showers	▲88	▼76
Chuuk	Mostly Cloudy	▲90	▼80
Pohnpei	Mostly Cloudy	▲87	▼78
Kosrae	Showers	▲88	▼76
Majuro	Rain	▲84	▼80

Around The Globe

Auckland	Rain	▲68	▼58
Beijing	Cloudy	▲36	▼25
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	▲75	▼65
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	▲80	▼68
London	Cloudy	▲46	▼36
Los Angeles	Rain	▲62	▼50
Manila	Partly Sunny	▲84	▼73
Melbourne	Mostly Cloudy	▲71	▼56
Miami	Cloudy	▲83	▼72
New York	Partly Sunny	▲39	▼29
Osaka	Dreary	▲54	▼37
Paris	Mostly Cloudy	▲38	▼29
Pusan	Cloudy	▲55	▼37
Rome	Sunny	▲52	▼36
Salem	Rain/Snow	▲44	▼34
San Francisco	Rain	▲57	▼48
Seoul	Partly Sunny	▲42	▼26
Tokyo	Cloudy	▲57	▼35
Washington, DC	Partly Sunny	▲42	▼32

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00AM, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2009
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A frontal boundary cuts westward across the northern portion of the discussion area from 24N180 to a low pressure system centered near Minami Tori Shima at 25N150E then continues west-southwestward as a shear line to beyond 130E at 18N. Extensive cloudiness and widespread rain are seen along and north of the frontal boundary to beyond 25N. Scattered showers are found along and up to 300 miles northwest of the shear line. A near-equatorial trough extends east-southeastward from Mindanao through a weak low-level circulation centered near Koror at 7N134E to a broad circulation centered west of Tarawa near 1N168E. Scattered showers are occurring along the trough axis over Koror but south of Yap within 100 miles of a line from 10N132E to 7N140E and south of Guam, Chuuk and Pohnpei within 100 miles of a line from 7N143E to 1N160E aided by upper-level divergence. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are evident near the broad circulation over Pohnpei and Kosrae within 115 miles of a line from 7N157E to EQ170E. Similar conditions are also present over Tarawa, Butaritari and Majuro Atolls between the equator and 10N from 170E to 180.

Tides

Saipan Harbor		
5:13 AM Today	High Tide:	1.5 Feet
10:02 AM Today	Low Tide:	1.0 Feet
3:50 PM Today	High Tide:	2.0 Feet
11:21 PM Today	Low Tide:	0.1 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:33 AM	5:48 PM
Sunday	6:34 AM	5:48 PM
Monday	6:34 AM	5:49 PM
Tuesday	6:35 AM	5:49 PM
Wednesday	6:36 AM	5:49 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	2:30 AM	2:18 PM
Sunday	3:24 AM	3:02 PM
Monday	4:19 AM	3:50 PM
Tuesday	5:15 AM	4:40 PM
Wednesday	6:09 AM	5:32 PM

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

- E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com or jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com.
- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

POLICY

- The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to accept or reject a contribution for publication; the right to edit all contributions, the date of publication, size of the picture, and page placement; and the right to publish contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats.
- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

CUSTOMER SERVICE For inquiries, purchase of back issues and complaints, call (670) 235-8747, 235-2440, fax 235-3740.

SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Saturday, *Saipan Tribune* offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of $160. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 12, 2009

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

C09597	11:30am	12:05pm	1, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM

C09597	12:40pm	1:10pm	1, 7

SAIPAN-GUAM

C09317	4:25am	5:15am	Daily
C09313	8:30am	9:20am	Daily
C09597	11:30am	1:10pm	1, 7 via ROP
C09601	12:20pm	1:10pm	4, 5
C09603	3:15pm	4:05pm	Daily
C09605	6:20pm	7:10pm	Daily
C09599	9:20pm	10:10pm	Daily

SAIPAN-NAGOYA (NGO)

NW287	6:00am	7:30pm	Daily via NRT

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

NW287	6:00am	8:40am	Daily
NW297	4:45pm	7:30pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:20am	6:50am	1, 5

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ604	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ606	3:20pm	7:00pm	2, 4, 6, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

FM844	2:50am	5:40am	2, 6

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

CZ3008	3:30am	6:40am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ604/701	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ604/701	2:40am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ604/703	2:50am	11:25am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ608/705	3:20am	1:30am+1	1, 5 via PUS
C09603/933	3:15pm	9:40pm	Daily via GUM
C09605/933	6:20pm	9:40pm	Daily via GUM
C09599/PR111	9:20pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM

SAIPAN-HONG KONG

OZ604/721	2:10am	12:00pm	1 via ICN
OZ604/721	2:40am	12:00pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ606/749	3:20pm	11:00pm	4, 6, 7 via ICN

ARRIVALS

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

C09598	3:10am	3:45am	5, 6
C09312	1:20pm	1:55pm	6

GUAM-ROTA (ROP)

C09598	2:00am	2:30am	5, 6
C09312	12:10pm	12:40pm	6

GUAM-SAIPAN

C09316	2:00am	2:30am	1, 2, 3, 4, 7
C09598	2:00am	3:45am	5, 6 via ROP
C09596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
C09600	10:05am	10:55am	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7
C09312	12:10pm	1:55pm	6 via ROP
C09602	1:50pm	2:40pm	1, 4, 5, 7
C09604	4:50pm	5:40pm	Daily
C09606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily

NAGOYA (NGO)-SAIPAN

NW288	12:05pm	1:20am+1	Daily via NRT

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

NW298	10:05am	2:50pm	Daily
NW288	8:45pm	1:20am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:00pm	2:10am+1	4, 7

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

OZ605	9:00am	2:20pm	2, 4, 6, 7
OZ603	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

FM843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1, 5

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

CZ3007	7:30pm	2:40am+1	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

OZ716/605	12:30am	2:20pm	4 via ICN
OZ706/607	3:35am	2:10am+1	4, 7 via PUS
OZ702/603	1:10pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/603	1:10pm	1:30am+1 via ICN	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
PR110/C09596	10:10pm	7:50am+1 via GUM	1, 3, 5, 6, 7
C0934/9596	11:10pm	7:50am+1	Daily via GUM
OZ704/605	11:55pm	2:20pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via ICN

HONG KONG-SAIPAN

OZ724/605	12:30am	2:20pm	2,4,6,7 via ICN
OZ750/605	1:00am	2:20pm	2,4,6,7 via ICN
OZ722/603	1:30pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/603	1:30pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

Schedule of Religious Services

CATHOLIC

Mt. Carmel Cathedral
Sunday Mass: 6am, 9am, 11am and 6pm
Monday-Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6am and 6pm

Korean Center
Sunday: 10:30am
Wednesday: 10am
Thursday-Friday: 8pm
Saturday: 3pm and 7:30pm

Kristo Rai Parish
Sunday Mass: 6am, 8am and 9:30am
Monday- Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6am and 6pm
Saturday: 6am and 6pm

Nuestra Senora De Soledad Parish
Wednesday Mass: 6pm
First Friday Healing Mass: 6pm
Saturday Mass: 6pm
Sunday Masses: 7:30am & 9am

Saint Jude Parish
Sunday: 6am, 8am, 10am
Wednesday and Thursday: 6pm

San Antonio Parish
Sunday: 6am and 8am
Tuesday and Friday: 6pm

San Francisco de Borja-Rota
Sunday: 6am and 8am
Monday-Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6pm

San Isidro-Rota
Sunday: 5am and 10am
Monday-Wednesday: 7pm
Thursday-Saturday: 5am and 7pm

San Jose (Oleai) Parish
Sunday: 6am and 7:30am
Tuesday-Wednesday and Friday-Saturday: 6pm

San Roque Parish
Sunday: 9am
Wednesday: 6pm
Saturday: 10:30am

San Vicente Parish
Sunday: 6am, 9am and 6pm
Monday-Saturday: 6pm

Santa Remedios
Sunday: 7:30am
Tuesday: 6pm
Saturday: 10am-Baptism

Santa Soledad
Sunday: 7:30am

PROTESTANT

Born Again Christian (Upper Room Int'l Ministries), Saipan
Wednesday Prayer and Healing Night: 8-10:30pm
Saturday Tagalog Service: 8-10:30pm
Sunday English Service: 9:30-11am
Sunday School for Children: 10-11am
Sunday Filipino Service: 7-9pm

Calvary Baptist Church, Saipan
Sunday School: 9am
Sunday Morning Worship: 10am
Sunday Evening Worship: 6pm
Wednesday Prayer Service: 7pm

Chinese Christian Church of Saipan
Worship Services: Sunday, 10am and 7:30pm
Bible Study: Tuesday-Friday, 9:25pm

Cornerstone Christian Church, Saipan
Worship/Study Opportunities
Adult Sunday School: 9am
Youth Sunday School: 9am
English Worship Service Sunday: 10am
Sunday Service: 5:30pm
Worship/Fellowship Sunday: 9:30pm
Evangelism/Follow-up: Sunday/Monday: 1:30/7:30pm
Worship Team: Monday/Saturday-9pm;
Cell Groups Tuesday: 7:30pm
Mid-week Service: 7:30pm
Prayer Meeting Wednesday: 7:30pm
Leader's Bible Study Friday: 7:30 pm
Cornerstone School of Ministry Saturday: 7:30pm

Episcopal/Anglican Church on Saipan
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Worship Service Sunday: Holy Communion 9:00am
Place: Vicarage, Chalan Laulau,
Call 235-0545 for directions

Grace Christian Assembly, Saipan
Worship Service: 9am
GBI Classes: 4-6pm
Prayer Meeting: Monday-Saturday: 6am
Sunday: 7am
Home Cell Bible Study: Wednesday-Friday: 7pm
Youth Service: Friday: 5:30pm

Iglesia Ni Cristo, Saipan
Wednesday: 7:45pm (Tagalog)
Thursday: 5:30am (English); 7:45 pm (English)
Saturday: 7:45pm (Tagalog)
Sunday: 6:45am (English)
Children Worship Service: Sunday, 9am (English)

Immanuel United Methodist Church Koblerville
Sunday Services
9:00 AM
Place of the church-next to Mt. Carmel Cathedral on Chalan Kanoa Dr. • Tel: 322-6158
Pastor JJ Matsumoto

Immanuel Methodist Church (Filipino Congregation)
Sunday: 7:00am-Choir Rehearsal
8:00am-Church Service (Tagalog)
9:15am-Sunday School
Wednesday: 6:30pm, home group
8:00pm-Prayer Meeting
Thursday: 7:30pm-Choir Practice (Church)
Saturday: 8:00pm-Choir Practice (Parsonage)

Jesus is Lord Church, Saipan
English Service: 9-11am, Sunday
Tagalog Service: 6-8pm, Sunday

Korean Presbyterian Church, Saipan
Sunday School: 8:20am
Sunday Adult: 10am
Sunday Adult: 11:30am
Sunday Evening: 7:30pm
Wednesday: 8pm

Life in the Son Christian Fellowship, Saipan
Sunday Worship Service: 10am–12noon
Tuesday: Leadership Institute 7pm-10pm
Wednesday: Corporate prayer 7pm-8pm
Last Friday of the month-prayer: 7pm-11pm
Friday: Youth on Fire: 7pm-9pm
Tel. No. 235-LIFE (5433)

Marianas Baptist Church, Saipan
English Worship Service: 9-10:30am
Evening Worship Service: 6-7pm
Children Sunday School: 9-10:30am
Tagalog Sunday School: 11am-12pm
English Sunday School: 11am-12pm
Korean Worship Service: 11am-12pm
Wednesday Prayer Meeting:
English, 7pm-8pm
Korean: 8:30pm-9:30pm

Missions Connection Ministry
Every Sunday Celebrations:
10am (English), 6pm (Tagalog)
Wednesday Bible Study: 7pm
Youth Impact Friday: 7pm
Saturday Prayer Meeting: 7pm

Northern Marianas Christian Church
Sunday Worship Service 10am Fina Sisu Housing FS#1 (Child care will be provided)
Friday Services @ 7pm Fina Sisu FS#1 for more info pls. contact Ryan 484-2620

Saipan Bible Fellowship Church
Sunday School: 9:30-10am
Divine Worship: 10am-11:30am
Evening Service: 7pm-8:30pm
Wednesday Prayer Meeting: 8pm-9pm

Saipan Christian Church
Sunday: 7:30am-10am
Sunday: 6:30 pm -9pm
Monday: 8 pm -10pm (Prayer Meeting)
Thursday: 8pm-10pm (Cell Groups)

Saipan Church of Christ
Sunday Bible Class: 9am
Sunday Worship: 10am
Sunday Worship English: 6pm
Sunday Worship Tagalog: 7pm
Wednesday Bible Study: 7:30pm

Saipan Community Church
(Sunday Services)
Palau Service: 7:30am-9am
English Service: 10am-11:30am
Chuukese Service: 1pm-2:30pm
Filipino Service: 5:00pm-7:00pm

Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Saipan
(Saturday Church Services)
Sabbath School Program: 9-10am
Lesson Study: 10-10:40am
Divine Service: 11-12pm
Visitation: 3-4pm
Adventist Youth Program: 4:30-5:30pm
Sundown Worship: 6-7pm

First Baptist Church
(Formerly Saipan Baptist Church)
Afetna St., San Antonio
Sunday
9am Sunday school
10am Regular worship
6pm worship
Wednesday
7pm worship
Everyone is warmly welcome to attend our worship services. Transportation is readily available to anyone who needs a ride to our church. For further information, please call Pastor David M. Mclure at 234-1939/235-7779.

Thy Word Ministries Saipan Faith Center
Phone 234-0209
New Christian Charismatic Church Service located in Chalan Paio, Beach Road in the Sablan building on the 2nd floor above Subway Sandwiches.
Senior Pastors: George & Gail Kamakahi
Asst. Pastors: Eric & Penny Sakaguchi
Service Times
Sunday 10:00am Worship Service
Sunday 7pm Discipleship Classes
Tuesday 10:00am Bible Studies
Tuesday 6:00pm Intercessory Prayer
Tuesday 7:00pm Music Practice
Wednesday 7:00pm Mid-Week Service
Saturday 10:00am Evangelism

Upper Room International Ministries
Sunday 5:30am-6:30am
Morning prayer
7am-9am English service
7am-9am Sunday school
10am-12noon English service, Koblerville
Wednesday 7pm-9pm Prayer meeting
Saturday 7pm-9pm Tagalog service
Venue: Jason Presbyterian Church
Gualo Rai, Saipan

Victory Chapel Christian Fellowship Church
Sunday School: 9:30am
Sunday AM Worship:10:30am
Sunday PM Worship:7:00am
Wed Worship: 7:30pm
Prayer 45 min. Prior to Service Times
Morning Prayer: 6-8am M-S

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

DEC. 12, 2000

Bicameral meeting eyed to seal pact on budget

The House and the Senate are set to go into bicameral conference on Thursday to begin hammering out an agreement on the much-delayed budget that will oil operations of the government for the next 10 months. The joint meeting will be held in the Legislature building on Saipan, ditching a request from the Senate to conduct the proceeding on Rota. Ways and Means Committee chair Rep. Antonio M. Camacho declined to comment when asked what the lower house intends to lay down on the negotiating table when they meet with their Senate counterparts.

OPA clears Karimipour on contract violation raps

Chief Public Defender Masood Karimipour was vindicated yesterday from allegations that he violated terms in his employment contract after a thorough investigation conducted by the Office of the Public Auditor revealed no evidence that he used company time and state-owned resources to engage in private activities. The public defender, however, asserted that while he has been cleared of allegations hurled against him, his accusers should not be permitted to run free after attempting to destroy his reputation through innuendo and rumors. "What still remains unresolved is the issue of how the Attorney General's Office, an agency that is supported by taxpayers money, can abuse the power of their office in engaging in petty and personal attacks and maliciously throwing mud at innocent individuals," he said.

DEC.12, 2001

Dust worries Tanapag residents

Tanapag Action Group Chair Juan Tenorio vowed to raise a barrage of complaints before federal government representatives once they face each other today in a scheduled meeting at the Division of Environmental Quality. Tenorio said the indirect thermal desorption machine, which has been put up by the contractor of the Army Corps of Engineers to treat some 20,000 tons of PCB-contaminated soil, has been emitting a huge amount of dust enough to cover the tall pine trees nearby. "The dust is very bad coming from the machine," Tenorio said. The TAG leader also expressed concern over the discharge of wastewater that will come from the ITD machine once the treatment process begins this January.

US-DOJ to reassess Saipan garment factories

The US Department of Justice has called for the immediate reassessment of all garment factories in the Northern Marianas following devious information earlier released on the alleged garment workers' use of drugs. US-DOJ National Drug Intelligence Center Director Michael T. Horn apologized to the Saipan Garment Manufacturing Association for his agency's irresponsible reporting, which alleged that garment workers on Saipan use drugs to increase their productivity. In a letter to SGMA Executive Director Richard A. Pierce, Horn admitted that the agency failed to substantiate the allegation and the agency regrets having it printed without proper verification.

DEC. 12, 2002

FEMA flies to Rota

Representatives from the Federal Emergency Management Agency were to conduct a preliminary damage assessment on Rota by helicopter yesterday, as the CNMI government remains expectant of a major disaster declaration by President Bush. With authorities projecting power restoration on the island to take several weeks or longer, hopes remained high that Bush would act swiftly on the CNMI's request for disaster declaration, so that federal funding could immediately be made available to rehabilitate Rota. "The request is on the President's desk for his review," said CNMI Press Secretary Pete Callaghan, saying he was told of this yesterday afternoon by FEMA's regional office headquartered in Oakland, California.

Govt earnings up 10 percent

Revenues collected by the CNMI Department of Finance for the Commonwealth government jumped more than 10 percent in the third quarter of the fiscal year 2002, in comparison with the previous three-month period's tally. A report prepared by the Central Statistics Division of the Department of Commerce indicated that taxes and fees collected by the finance department during the period under review totaled $50.3 million, up from the $45.57 million in the previous quarter. Compared with the figure reported in the third quarter of last financial year, however, this year's third quarter collection was lower by more than 16 percent. The finance department collected about $60 million during the same period last fiscal year.

Business

Next hot jobs: keeping tabs on financial firms

WASHINGTON (AP)—People who knew how to make a quick buck held some of the fastest-growing jobs two years ago.

Now, the growth industry is in helping financial firms figure out how to follow the rules.

Financial examiners and compliance officers are expected to be two of the nation's 30 fastest-growing occupations over the next 10 years, according to a Labor Department report released Thursday.

Two years ago, financial analysts—the people at investment firms who pore over stocks and bonds—were on that list. But one financial crisis later, their occupation has fallen out of the top 30.

Robert Johnson, senior managing director at the CFA Institute, a membership group for money managers and financial analysts, said the report is good news for the financial markets.

"The finance industry grew so rapidly that people were attracted for the wrong reasons," he said. "People were buying and selling assets they didn't understand."

If securities firms and other institutions increase their focus on compliance, "that's wonderful news for investors," he said.

Financial examiner jobs are projected to grow more than 40 percent from 2008 to 2018, the department's report said. Examiners are employed by banks, insurance companies and other firms, as well as by the government agencies that regulate them. They're charged with ensuring that the firms comply with the state and federal rules that govern their industries. The occupation will account for 38,000 jobs in 10 years, the department said.

Compliance officers perform similar work and are mostly employed by government regulators and financial firms. They are more numerous than examiners, and their jobs are forecast to jump 31 percent to a total of 341,000 by 2018, the department said.

Accountants and auditors are projected to add 279,000 jobs within 10 years, the department said, for a total of almost 1.6 million.

All these professions "will benefit from an increasingly complex regulatory environment," the department said. Congress is considering wide-ranging legislation to tighten the rules governing Wall Street.

Every two years, the Labor Department projects how many jobs the economy will generate over the next decade and in what industries and occupations.

Many of the occupations the department expects to grow the fastest are concentrated in the health care industry. The aging U.S. population is creating greater demand for nurses, home health aides and physician assistants.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

1 year later, fallout from Madoff's massive fraud

NEW YORK (AP)—The FBI agents who arrived at Bernard Madoff's luxury penthouse apartment on the morning of Dec. 11, 2008, found a broken man in a bathrobe who knew his time was up. The one-time titan of finance confessed he had "paid investors with money that wasn't there." A year after Madoff's scheme collapsed—with headlines of $50 billion in losses—investigators and investors are still struggling to measure the full scope and impact of the largest securities fraud in history. The scandal has already resulted in more aggressive enforcement and stiffer sentences for white-collar crime, and tougher regulations from the Securities and Exchange Commission.

China recovery gathers pace as export slump eases

SHANGHAI (AP)—The slump in China's exports eased in November as global demand improved while strong gains in industrial output and retail sales showed that the recovery in the world's third-bigggest economy is gathering momentum. China's exports fell 1.2 percent from a year earlier last month, their smallest decline since exports began falling in November of last year, customs figures showed Friday. Imports rose 26.7 percent, helping narrow the trade surplus to $19.9 billion in November, from $24 billion in October. "The decline in exports narrowed greatly in November because external demand is improving," said Sheng Laiyun, spokesman of the National Statistics Bureau, who briefed reporters in Beijing.

Europe exceeds US in bank bonus crackdown

NEW YORK (AP)—Better to be a banker in New York than Europe this bonus season. The leaders of Britain and France are embracing a one-time tax on fat bonuses paid by bailed-out banks—a restriction that goes far beyond what's being considered in the United States. Still, anger over lavish Wall Street pay is forcing some U.S. banks to take pre-emptive action. Goldman Sachs, the elite investment bank that repaid its $10 billion in bailout funds earlier this year, said Thursday it won't give cash bonuses to 30 top executives. Instead, they'll be paid in stock that can't be cashed in for five years.

Nation

Senate Dems may change health care compromise

WASHINGTON (AP)—Senate Democrats are considering changing a proposed expansion of Medicare to address complaints from doctors and hospitals and defray costs for consumers, officials said Thursday, two days after party leaders hailed it as part of a breakthrough for health care.

Under the plan, uninsured individuals ages 55 to 64 could purchase coverage under Medicare. The expansion is part of a compromise for dropping a full-blown national government-run insurance plan from the legislation that Democrats and the White House hope to push through the Senate by Christmas.

The American Hospital Association and American Medical Association have both criticized the proposed Medicare expansion since it was announced Tuesday night, saying the program pays health care providers less than private insurance companies, and warning against increasing the number of patients.

"We are trying to find a solution," Sen. Max Baucus, D-Mont., chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, told reporters in the Capitol, saying that the groups had raised legitimate concerns.

AP

Sens. John McCain, R-Ariz., from left, Jon Kyl, R-Ariz., partially hidden, and Minority Leader Mitch Mc Connell take part in a health care news conference on Capitol Hill in Washington, Thursday, Dec. 10, 2009.

Separately, officials said there were discussions about the possibility of defraying the expense of Medicare coverage for uninsured individuals under 65. Under some estimates, the cost could be as high as $7,600 annually—more than $600 a month—until subsidies become available in 2014.

Current Medicare beneficiaries pay $96.40 per month, with the government picking up the rest of the premium cost.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity, saying they were not authorized to discuss possible changes publicly.

The other key part of Tuesday night's compromise called for creation of private insurance plans to be overseen by the Office of Personnel Management, the federal agency that oversees the insurance program used by members of Congress and their families.

When Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid unveiled the compromise, he told reporters he could finally see the end in sight of the long struggle to overhaul the nation's health care system. The measure under debate in the Senate would extend coverage to tens of millions who lack it, ban the insurance industry practice of denying insurance because of pre-existing medical conditions and generally rein in the skyrocketing cost of medical care nationally.

Report: Blackwater guards linked to secret CIA raids

WASHINGTON (AP)—Private security guards working for Blackwater USA participated in clandestine CIA raids against suspected insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan, The New York Times reported Thursday.

Blackwater's role points to a much deeper connection between the company and the spy agency than has been previously disclosed and raises concerns over the legalities of involving contractors in the most sensitive operations conducted by the U.S. government.

The "snatch and grab" raids took place regularly between 2004 and 2006, the Times reported, when the insurgency in Iraq was escalating and security throughout the country was deteriorating.

A U.S. official confirmed to The Associated Press that Blackwater provided security and moved around with CIA teams on missions in war zones, but he denied they performed CIA missions. CIA Director Leon Panetta ordered a review several months ago of the company's contracts to be sure its guards only perform security-related work, the official said. He spoke on condition of anonymity becsause he was not authorized to comment publicly.

CIA spokesman George Little said, "This agency, like many others, uses contractors in roles that complement and enhance the skills of our own work force, just as American law permits."

"Agency staff officers have the decision-making authority and bear responsibility for results," Little said.

Blackwater, based in Moyock, N.C., changed its corporate name to Xe Services after a series of use-of-force controversies, including a September 2007 shooting in Baghdad by five company security guards that left 17 civilians dead.

US-born Hispanics see gains in education, income

UNITED STATES
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
COUNCIL on DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
Developmental Disabilities Basic State Grant Program
Bldg. No 1312, Capitol Hill • P.O. Box 502565, Saipan, MP 96950-2565
Tel.: (670) 664-7000 • Fax: (670) 664-7030
Email: p.sablan@cnmicdd.org • Website: www.cnmicdd.org

1st Quarterly Council on Developmental Disabilities Board Meeting

Attention General Public:

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 12, the CNMI Council on Developmental Disabilities under Chairperson Marissa Guerrero is hereby calling for the First Quarterly Meeting to take place on December 19, 2009 (Saturday) from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saipan at the (CNMI Council on Developmental Disabilities Conference Room). The meeting is called based upon the CNMI Council on Developmental Disabilities Bylaws (dated January 31, 2003).

AGENDA

I. Call to Order
II. Roll Call
III. Establishment of Order
IV. Adoption of Agenda – December 19, 2009
V. Adoption of Minutes – September 22, 2009
VI. Adoption of By-Laws
VII. Committee Reports
  a. Call-A-Ride Committee Report-PSS-CDD MOA
  b. Fiscal Committee Report-DD Basic FY 2010 Budget
VIII. Executive Director's Report
IX. New Business
  a. CDD Quarterly Newsletter
  b. State Plan 2012
X. Open Discussion
XI. Next meeting
XII. Adjournment

In accordance to the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), individuals who wish to attend this meeting and require special accommodations are requested to call the Council 3 days in advance at 664-7000. The Public is welcome to submit written or oral comments regarding the agenda above.

/S/ Marissa Guerrero, Chairperson

WASHINGTON(AP)—Young Hispanics born in the U.S. are less likely to drop out of school and live in poverty than young Hispanic immigrants, but they have higher exposure to gangs and violence, an independent research group says.

The study being released Friday by the Pew Hispanic Center paints a mixed picture of assimilation for a fast-growing group of U.S. citizens starting to wield their political rights: more education and job advancement, but also social problems.

The survey and analysis of census data found the high school dropout rate among all Hispanic youths ages 16-24 was 17 percent, roughly three times higher than white youths and close to double the rate for black youths. But when broken down by second-generation Hispanics born in the U.S., the dropout rate falls to 8.5 percent, roughly the same for youths of all races.

U.S.-born Hispanics also had improvements in economic well-being. About 29 percent of young immigrant Hispanics lived below the poverty line, more than twice the rate for young whites in a similar age range (13 percent) and slightly worse than young blacks (28 percent). But among second-generation Hispanics, that figure living below the poverty line improves to 19 percent.

On the other hand, the American-born youths were twice as likely as their immigrant counterparts to have ties to a gang or to have gotten into a fight or carried a weapon in the past year.

ACROSS THE NATION

Stubborn storm leaves behind a shivering nation

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP)—A deadly, windy storm that has paralyzed a wide swath of the nation for days left bitter cold behind as it finally made its exit Thursday, with temperatures below freezing in several states and gusts that made it feel as cold as minus 25. Power failures in the Midwest, dozens of lost hunters in the West and howling winds that helped blow over a bus in New York provided just a few lingering miseries from the first major storm of the season. Emergency rooms took in people who had slipped and fallen, overdone shoveling or reached their hands into clogged snowblowers, while tow trucks freed drivers from the sides of icy roads and everyday residents simply struggled to get around in the frigid winds.

Western NY frets as 100-year-old molester is freed

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP)—Everything that pedophile Theodore Sypnier has to show for his 100 years on Earth is packed in a single duffel bag as he prepares to begin a new chapter in life: freedom. It's a chapter that prosecutors, judges and others who know him never wanted—or expected—to see written. New York's oldest registered sex offender is scheduled to move by week's end out of a Buffalo halfway house for released inmates and into a place of his own, after completing his latest term in state prison for molesting little girls. The judge who sentenced him said at the time that she expected him to die behind bars. But 10 years after his last arrest, as Sypnier prepared to shed the closely monitored lifestyle of the halfway house, its director warned that the spry and active Sypnier has not changed from the manipulator who used his grandfatherly charm to snare and rape victims as young as 4.

NYC police: Officer kills Times Square scammer

NEW YORK (AP)—A plain-clothes cop chased a scam artist through sidewalks crowded with holiday shoppers and tourists Thursday in the heart of Times Square, killing the suspect near a landmark Broadway hotel after a gunfight that shattered box office and gift shop windows, police said. No one else was injured. The 25-year-old suspect and his brother were trying to dupe tourists into buying CDs and movies along Broadway and 46th Street just before noon when he was recognized by a sergeant who runs a task force that monitors aggressive panhandling, Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly said. The officer asked them for their tax identification, which allows peddlers to sell on the streets. But suspect took off running, through to the Marriott Marquis hotel's passenger drop-off area, Kelly said.

World

Obama defends war in call for peace

AP

Thorbjon Jagland, head of the Nobel committee, First Lady Michelle Obama and US President Barack Obama at a banquet in Obama's honor in Oslo, Thursday, Dec. 10, 2009.

OSLO (AP)—Newly enshrined among the world's great peacemakers, President Barack Obama offered a striking defense of war. Eleven months into his presidency, a fresh Obama doctrine. Evil must be vigorously opposed, he declared as he accepted the Nobel Peace Prize on Thursday. At the same time, he made an impassioned case for building a "just and lasting peace."

"I face the world as it is, and cannot stand idle in the face of threats to the American people," Obama told his audience in Oslo's soaring City Hall. "For make no mistake: Evil does exist in the world."

Pronouncing himself humbled by such an honor so early in "my labors on the world stage," Obama nevertheless turned his Nobel moment into an unapologetic defense of armed intervention in times of self defense or moral necessity. The hawkish message was an inevitable nod to the controversy defining his selection: an American president, lauded for peace just as he escalates the long, costly war in Afghanistan.

It was a jarring moment when Obama, in the midst of the ceremony, said of his troops in Afghanistan: "Some will kill. Some will be killed."

He lauded Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr., preachers of nonviolent action. But he added, "A nonviolent movement could not have halted Hitler's armies. Negotiations cannot convince al-Qaida's leaders to lay down their arms."

"To say that force is sometimes necessary is not a call to cynicism, it is a recognition of history."

The president laid out circumstances in which war is justified—in self-defense, to come to the aid of an invaded nation, on humanitarian grounds such as when civilians are slaughtered by their own government.

At the same time, he also stressed a need to fight war according to "rules of conduct" that reject torture, the murder of innocents and other atrocities.

Nations seek climate financing for poor countries

COPENHAGEN (AP)—European nations pressed former East bloc neighbors Thursday to help create a multibillion-dollar fund for poor countries suffering the most from global warming, while key U.S. senators signaled progress on legislation in line with what President Barack Obama will pledge at the U.N. climate conference next week.

The release of the legislative blueprint was timed to bolster the argument by U.S. delegates in Copenhagen that Washington is taking climate change seriously and that Congress is making progress—albeit slowly—on reducing heat-trapping greenhouse gases. There were questions, meanwhile, about how to distribute the money, $10 billion a year in fast-track funds for developing countries.

U.S. climate negotiator Jonathan Pershing said the U.S. is willing to pay its fair share, but he added that donors "don't have unlimited largesse to disburse."

Britain has said it will contribute $1.3 billion over three years, and Sweden will give $1.2 billion (euro800 million). The Dutch say they will contribute $442 million (euro300 million) over three years, and the Belgians $221 million (euro150 million). A Danish diplomat said Denmark would give $233 million (euro160 million), bringing the total known European pledges to nearly $3.5 billion.

US, allies warn of new Iran sanctions

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—The United States, Britain and France warned Thursday that Iran risks increased sanctions unless it immediately complies with a series of Security Council resolutions regarding its nuclear program.

Ambassadors from the three countries made their comments at a Security Council meeting after a sanctions committee report to the council on Thursday found an "apparent pattern of sanctions violations involving prohibited arms transfers" over the past three months.

"There is no longer any reason to wait" to consider deeper sanctions, France's Ambassador to the U.N. Geraud Araud told the council.

While Thursday's report dealt mainly with the interdiction of two vessels carrying weapons from Iran and headed for Syria, recent revelations of an undeclared uranium enrichment plant near the city of Qom and Iran's recent declaration that it intends to build 10 more enrichment plants stirred the most concern among diplomats.

WORLD BRIEFS

NKorea says it understands need for nuclear talks

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea said Friday that it understands the need to resume stalled international talks on ending its nuclear programs, and agreed to work with the United States to narrow unspecified "remaining differences." The statement from North Korea's Foreign Ministry was the first reaction from the communist nation to three days of high-level talks with President Barack Obama's special envoy. Upon returning from North Korea on Thursday, envoy Stephen Bosworth said in Seoul that the two sides reached common understandings on the need to restart the nuclear talks. Though North Korea stopped short of making a firm commitment to return to the negotiating table, its reaction appears to be positive and raises hope that the stalled disarmament process could resume.

AP source: Drone attack kills al-Qaida member

WASHINGTON (AP)—A U.S. government official says a top al-Qaida operative has been killed in a drone attack in western Pakistan. The official would not immediately identify the target of the attack, which he said occurred very recently. However, he said it was neither Osama bin Laden nor Ayman al-Zawahiri, the terrorist network's top two leaders. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the classified program publicly. The drone attack was first reported Wednesday night by NBC News. Intelligence officials have confirmed that the pace of attacks by armed unmanned aerial vehicles has increased during the Obama administration.

NOTICE TO ALL ALIENS IN THE CNMI

Pursuant to P.L. 110-229, the U.S. Department of the Interior is required to report to the U.S. Congress regarding the number of aliens within the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.
P.L.110-229 further orders the U.S. Department of Interior to make recommendations to the U.S. Congress regarding the long-term status of aliens who were physically present in the CNMI on November 28, 2009.

Accordingly, the Office of the Ombudsman will be conducting an accounting of all aliens within the CNMI pursuant to the schedule below. For purposes of the accounting, alien means any person physically present in the CNMI who does not hold a U.S. passport or U.S. permanent resident card regardless of any Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands permit held.

When reporting to the Ombudsman's office at Suite 203, Marina Heights II, Puerto Rico, Saipan, an alien must provide a copy of a passport or other photo identification.

Any alien, who cannot report to the Ombudsman's office during the scheduled time, should call 322-8030 for further information.

All data shall be gathered between December 14th and December 30th 2009. There will be no exceptions to the December 30th deadline.

SCHEDULE OF REGISTRATION

LAST NAMES STARTING WITH	DATE	TIME
A - B	14-Dec-2009	4 PM TO 12 MN
C - D	15-Dec-2009	4 PM TO 12 MN
E - F	16-Dec-2009	4 PM TO 12 MN
G - H	17-Dec-2009	4 PM TO 12 MN
I - J	18-Dec-2009	4 PM TO 12 MN
K - L	19-Dec-2009	9 AM TO 5 PM
M - N	20-Dec-2009	9 AM TO 5 PM
O - P	21-Dec-2009	4 PM TO 12 MN

LAST NAMES STARTING WITH	DATE	TIME
Q - R	22-Dec-2009	4 PM TO 12 MN
S - T	23-Dec-2009	4 PM TO 12 MN
U - V	24-Dec-2009	3 PM TO 7 PM
W - X	26-Dec-2009	9 AM TO 5 PM
Y - Z	27-Dec-2009	9 AM TO 5 PM
Mandarin and Tagalog	28-Dec-2009	4 PM TO 12 MN
Mandarin and Tagalog	29-Dec-2009	4 PM TO 12 MN

PAUNAWA SA LAHAT NG DAYUHAN SA CNMI

Alinsunod sa P.L. 110-229, ang U.S. Department of Interior ay kinakailangang mag report sa U.S. Congress patungkol sa bilang ng dayuhan sa Commonwealth ng Northern Mariana Islands. Iniuutos din ng P.L. 110-229 na ang Department of Interior ay gumawa ng rekomendasyon sa U.S. Congress patungkol sa pang-matagalang kalagayan ng mga dayuhan na pisikal na nasa CNMI noong Nobyembre 28, 2009.

Dahil dito, ang Office ng Ombudsman ay magsasagawa ng accounting ng lahat ng dayuhan sa CNMI alinsunod sa iskedyul sa baba. Para sa layunin ng accounting, and dayuhan ay ang sinumang tao na pisikal na nasa CNMI na walang hawak na U.S passport o U.S. permanent resident card kahit pa may anumang permit ng Commonwealth ng Northern Mariana Islands na hinawakan.

Kapag nag report sa Ombudsman's Office sa Suite 203, Marina Heights II, Puerto Rico, Saipan, ang dayuhan ay kinakailangang magbigay ng kopya ng passport o anumang pagkakakilanlan na may litrato.

Ang sinumang dayuhan na hindi makakapag report sa Ombudsman's office sa itinakdang iskedyul, ay kinakailangang tumawag sa 322-8030 para sa karagdagang impormasyon.

Lahat ng impormasyon ay kinakailangang makuha mula ika-14 ng Disyembre hanggang ika-30 ng Disyembre 2009. Walang magiging exceptions sa deadline na ika-30 ng Disyembre.

ISKEDYUL NG PAGREREHISTRO

MGA APELYIDONG NAGSISIMULA SA	PETSA	ORAS
A - B	14-Dec-2009	4 PM TO 12 MN
C - D	15-Dec-2009	4 PM TO 12 MN
E - F	16-Dec-2009	4 PM TO 12 MN
G - H	17-Dec-2009	4 PM TO 12 MN
I - J	18-Dec-2009	4 PM TO 12 MN
K - L	19-Dec-2009	9 AM TO 5 PM
M - N	20-Dec-2009	9 AM TO 5 PM
O - P	21-Dec-2009	4 PM TO 12 MN

MGA APELYIDONG NAGSISIMULA SA	PETSA	ORAS
Q - R	22-Dec-2009	4 PM TO 12 MN
S - T	23-Dec-2009	4 PM TO 12 MN
U - V	24-Dec-2009	3 PM TO 7 PM
W - X	26-Dec-2009	9 AM TO 5 PM
Y - Z	27-Dec-2009	9 AM TO 5 PM
Mandarin at Tagalog	28-Dec-2009	4 PM TO 12 MN
Mandarin at Tagalog	29-Dec-2009	4 PM TO 12 MN

公告

致所有在北马里亚纳群岛联邦境内的外籍人士

根据公法 110-229，美国内政部需要向美国国会报告北马里亚纳群岛联邦的外籍人口数目。公法 110-229 进一步要求美国内政部，对关于 2009 年 11 月 28 日身处北马里亚纳群岛联邦境内的外籍人士的长期身份问题，向美国国会提供建议。

因此，监察官办公室（人权办）将会根据以下时间表对所有在北马里亚纳群岛联邦境内的外籍人口进行统计。为了方便统计，一位外籍人士应是目前身处北马里亚纳群岛联邦境内的，无论持有任何北马里亚纳群岛联邦的白卡身份，但却没有美国护照（即美国公民身份）或美国永久居民卡（即美国绿卡身份）的任何人士。

当来到位于塞班岛波多黎各区、马里纳 2 号大楼 203 号的监察官办公室（人权办）登记时，每位外籍人士必须提供一份护照的复印件或其他带照片的身份证明。

任何外籍人士，如果不能在预定安排时间内向监察官办公室（人权办）登记的，应打电话 322-8030 以取得更多信息。

所有资料将会在 2009 年 12 月 14 日至 12 月 30 日之内收集完毕。对 12 月 30 日的最终期限将不会有任何例外。

登记时间表

姓氏开头的第一个字母	日期	时间
A - B	2009 年 12 月 14 日	下午 4 点 至 午夜 12 点
C - D	2009 年 12 月 15 日	下午 4 点 至 午夜 12 点
E - F	2009 年 12 月 16 日	下午 4 点 至 午夜 12 点
G - H	2009 年 12 月 17 日	下午 4 点 至 午夜 12 点
I - J	2009 年 12 月 18 日	下午 4 点 至 午夜 12 点
K - L	2009 年 12 月 19 日	上午 9 点 至 下午 5 点
M - N	2009 年 12 月 20 日	上午 9 点 至 下午 5 点
O - P	2009 年 12 月 21 日	下午 4 点 至 午夜 12 点

姓氏开头的第一个字母	日期	时间
Q - R	2009 年 12 月 22 日	下午 4 点 至 午夜 12 点
S - T	2009 年 12 月 23 日	下午 4 点 至 午夜 12 点
U - V	2009 年 12 月 24 日	下午 3 点 至 下午 7 点
W - X	2009 年 12 月 26 日	上午 9 点 至 下午 5 点
Y - Z	2009 年 12 月 27 日	上午 9 点 至 下午 5 点
中文和菲律宾语服务	2009 年 12 月 28 日	下午 4 点 至 午夜 12 点
中文和菲律宾语服务	2009 年 12 月 29 日	下午 4 点 至 午夜 12 点

Maharlika

PINOY LIFE IN THE MARIANAS

Saturday, December 12, 2009

Congress verdict on martial law out Tuesday

By LIRA DALANGIN-FERNANDEZ
INQUIRER.NET

MANILA, Philippines—A verdict on Proclamation 1959 that placed Maguindanao under martial law will finally be known by Tuesday when the joint session of Congress votes on it, Speaker Prospero Nograles said.

Nograles reminded lawmakers to shun away from politicking, stressing they were called upon to scrutinize President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's assessment on the supposed rebellion in the restive province.

"The question is simply whether this declaration was necessary or not. All other political considerations should not even be considered," he said.

After two days in joint session, lawmakers have spent a total of 11.5 hours of the 20 hours allotted for deliberation. A total of nine senators and eight congressmen have either interpellated the resources persons or delivered their views on the proclamation on the floor.

Nograles expressed confidence all views on the declaration of martial law and suspension of the writ of habeas corpus following the November 23 mass murder in Maguindanao would be fully aired on December 14 when session resumes at 4 p.m.

"I think by Monday the issue of necessity of declaration of martial law will be clearly joined and ripe for voting," he said.

He observed that the questions were similar "but couched in different angles, but the bottom-line remains the same."

"We cannot debate on this issue until eternity," he said.

The House leader said the joint session showed that Congress has exercised its mandate of check-and-balance.

"Those who are for or against PP 1959 and the resource persons who underwent intense grilling by both sides made their positions very clear under the full scrutiny of the media and the public. At the end of the day, we all have to decide based on the merits of the arguments and presentations of each side," Nograles said.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Justice Secretary Agnes Devanadera, Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno, Defense Secretary Norberto Gonzales, Philippine National Police chief Jesus Versoza and Armed Forces of the Philippine chief of staff Victor Ibrado Jr. took turns in defending the order.

Bayan Muna party list Representative Teodoro Casiño and Nueva Ecija Representative Eduardo Nonato Joson said the President's defenders stuck well to their script in justifying the proclamation even amid criticisms that there was no basis for it since actual rebellion was not taking place at the time it was declared on December 4.

Security officials said they have reports that supporters of the Ampatuan clan, the prime suspects in the massacre of at least 57 people on November 23 in Maguindanao, were arming and massing up to go against the government. Palace officials also said that the civilian government was no longer functioning because no court would want to handle the case.

Casiño said that the conditions for martial law did not exist.

"They have revised the definition of martial law. They are using martial law to undermine due process through warrantless arrests, searches and seizures," he said.

DEADLY BLAZE AP

People rummage through debris Friday Dec. 11, 2009 following a fire that gutted more than a thousand homes at downtown Manila late Thursday killing two children. The fire, which took seven hours for firefighters to put out, left more than 15,000 people homeless, according to fire investigator Lords Hernandez. He says the inferno reached some cells and the infirmary of the Manila city jail but there were no casualties there. Hernandez says some of those who lost their shanties are temporarily housed at a nearby basketball court. He says the dead include two brothers aged 1 and 3 who were trapped on the second floor of their home and could not be saved. He quoted witnesses as saying the fire started from a small gas stove.

Filipina completes 3,000-mile run across US

ENGLEWOOD, Colorado (INQUIRER.net)—What began as a charity run to raise money to fight tuberculosis and heart disease has become a fire of inspiration for all Filipinos across the nation.

A survivor of tuberculosis herself, Filipina runner Joy Rojas began her journey in the Eagle Rock Plaza in Los Angeles, California on May 10 and arrived in New York City on Nov. 23, completing a run of over 3,000 miles across the United States.

"They said it couldn't be done, but with hard work, determination, commitment, endless prayers, and the help of so many people, running across America—and any dream for that matter—can be achieved," Rojas said.

"Thank you to Western Union and everybody who paved the way for us to run from California to New York. It was a privilege and an honor."

She was welcomed into New York City by her proud sponsor, Western Union Company, a global payment services company which also sponsored her Takbong Pangarap Trans USA Run.

GINO KUO

From left, Consul Zalady Patron; Shirleen Velasquez, Sr. Mgr. of USOB Phil. at WU; Mat Macabe; Joy Rojas; Consul Cecil Rebong.

"We are so proud to support such a great cause and also build awareness about our great services. She perfectly exemplifies the can-do spirit that matches Western Union's yes! campaign," shared Silvia Eliat, marketing director of ethnic segments for Western Union.

Overcoming countless odds and experiencing major hurdles, the journey has not been smooth for Rojas. Throughout the run, she encountered elevations as high as 8,000 feet and weather that ranged from 100 degree scorching heat to near-freezing temperatures. She even saw snow for the first time in her life.

After a knee injury delayed her expedition by several weeks, Rojas finally arrived in Washington DC, where she was greeted by a large crowd of fans excited to see her. One of the Western Union® Agent locations in Fort Washington, MD hosted a welcoming party where Rojas shared her experiences and rested to complete her run to New York.

She arrived in New York City on Sunday night and was ready to meet and greet with fans and media on Monday afternoon at an event hosted by Western Union at the Philippines consulate general.

Running with her trainer Mat Macabe, who underwent open-heart surgery last year, Rojas decided to challenge herself with this Trans USA run to benefit a division of the Philippine Heart Center and the Anti-TB Program of the Inner Wheel Club, District 378.

In addition to working with Joy Rojas to help her achieve her goal, Western Union also works hard to support the community and its customers. In the spirit of the holidays and giving, Western Union is offering its consumers several promotions this season. First is the "$50 for $5" promotion where consumers can send up to $50 to loved ones in the US for a $5 fee through December 26, 2009. Also, consumers can send $50 or more internationally by December 26, 2009 and receive a coupon good for 40-percent off the next qualifying money transfer. Western Union is also offering the ability to send cash on a Western Union branded prepaid gift card.

The Western Union Company (NYSE: WU) is a leader in global payment services. Together with its Vigo, Orlandi Valuta, and Pago Facil branded payment services, Western Union provides consumers with fast, reliable, and convenient ways to send and receive money around the world, as well as send payments and purchase money orders. Western Union, Vigo, and Orlandi Valuta operate through a combined network of more than 385,000 agent locations in 200 countries and territories. Famous for its pioneering telegraph services, the original Western Union dates back to 1851. For more information, visit www.westernunion.com.

Filipino abductors free 9 more hostages, hold 48

By OLIVER TEVES
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

MANILA, Philippines (AP)— Government-armed former militiamen freed nine more hostages they seized in the remote southern Philippines, and their leader demanded Friday that murder charges against them be dropped before they release 48 other captives.

The abductions Thursday by 15 gunmen raised new questions over the Philippines' long-standing policy of arming civilian volunteers to protect against insurgencies. Just a day earlier, 100 other militiamen in the south were named suspects in the massacre of 57 people in the country's worst political massacre, prompting the government to order a review of the security policy.

Hours after the kidnappings, a government negotiator persuaded the gunmen to free 17 schoolchildren and an elderly woman among more than 70 people they initially seized. As negotiations resumed Friday, the gunmen released nine more — eight women and a man — negotiator Josefina Bajade said.

"There will be another round of negotiations for the remaining hostages," she told The Associated Press. "We cannot get them all in one go."

Police said they were trying to arrest two brothers among the gunmen on murder charges. One of the brothers, Joebert Perez, the gang leader who was negotiating with Bajade, met with reporters outside three huts where the hostages were being held.

Perez said the charges against him were fabricated and blamed a rival clan, the Tubays, for the killing of six of his siblings since last year. He demanded that police disarm the enemy clan before the remaining hostages are released.

Nestor Fajura, provincial police operations officer, said the negotiations with the gunmen included the disarming of both clans. "The Perezes will not disarm if the Tubays have the firearms. So both will be disarmed," he said.

Some of the hostages sat on the grass watching as Perez, a man in his 30s sporting a shaved head, was interviewed. He was armed with an M-16 rifle and was holding a grenade in his hand.

The standoff in a remote southern hamlet in Agusan del Sur province seemed more relaxed on the second day, with an unusual twist overnight when about a dozen relatives of the kidnappers appeared, one of the captives told the AP by phone. The man, who was not identified because of fears for his safety, said the relatives feared an attack from the rival clan. It was not clear why they were allowed to enter the hostage area.

"They are related to our abductors," he said. "They prepare the food for them because they fear their food might be poisoned."

About nine children were seen among the relatives, some of them naked toddlers running and playing around outside the houses where the hostages were being held.

Bajade said social workers later escorted the relatives out of the area to a nearby township.

The hostage-takers in San Martin hamlet are former militiamen who had been dismissed and turned to banditry and extortion, targeting mining and logging companies in the area, said police Chief Superintendent Jaime Milla.

AP

Joebert "Ondo" Perez, a Government-armed former militiaman, talks to the media at a remote village in Prosperidad township, Agusan del Sur province in southern Philippines Friday Dec. 11, 2009.

For decades, the Philippines government has armed civilian volunteers — often poorly trained and ill-disciplined — as a backup security force in areas with communist or Muslim insurgencies.

Human rights groups have called on the Philippines to stop arming civilians, saying the region is already awash with weapons from the continuing conflicts.

At least 100 government militiamen are among 161 suspects in last month's massacre of 57 people in an election convoy in Maguindanao province, on the opposite western side of volatile Mindanao Island.

The country's worst political killings prompted the government to send troops to disarm all paramilitary groups and declare martial law in the province. After the Nov. 23 killings, President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo created an independent commission to oversee the dismantling of clan-dominated private armies — which usually consist of government militias.

The murder charges against the Perez brothers reportedly stem from the clan feud, which Bajade said started when rival Tubay clansmen allegedly killed some members of the Perez family last year. The Perez brothers allegedly retaliated by killing six members of the Tubay clan, she said.

Ampatuan car collection awes soldiers

'What an arrogant display of wealth!'

By MARLON RAMOS
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SHARIFF AGUAK, MAGUINDANAO—A fleet of luxury vehicles Thursday greeted soldiers searching for weapons at the sprawling home of Maguindanao warlord Andal Ampatuan Sr., whose family has been blamed for the Nov. 23 massacre of 57 people.

Armed with metal detectors and shovels, the troops uncovered an arms cache in a corn dryer beside the Ampatuan mansion.

AP

In this Dec. 3, 2009 photo released by the Philippine National Police, police officers dig up arsenals and weapons buried near the mansions of the powerful Ampatuan clan in Shariff Aguak, Maguindanao province, southern Philippines.

In nearby Ampatuan town Thursday night, gunmen opened fire on a military convoy carrying evidence against the Ampatuans to General Santos City at around 8pm, but there were no immediate reports of fatalities.

Bursts of gunfire could still be heard 30 minutes later several meters from an Army checkpoint, reporters at the scene said.

A dazzling array of sport utility vehicles in an old stable amazed soldiers conducting the raid in the Ampatuan compound in the heart of an impoverished region. It resembled a showroom of expensive cars in Makati City.

"What an arrogant display of wealth!" said a shocked Army colonel.

Among the vehicles were a military-type sports truck Hummer, a Toyota Land Cruiser, a Chevrolet Suburban, a GMC luxury truck, two Toyota Hi-Lux pickup trucks, a Ford F150, an Isuzu D-Max, a Toyota Hi-Ace van and two military trucks.

Several flatbed trucks could also be seen in an adjacent parking area.

The raiding team did not check on the vehicles as these were not included in the mission order issued by Lt. Gen. Raymundo Ferrer, the martial law administrator in the province.

The discovery of the expensive vehicles came amid reports that the powerful Ampatuan clan had amassed unexplained wealth a decade after ruling over a province considered among the country's three poorest provinces.

The searchers found underneath a heap of dried corn cobs a digital camera and a laptop bag containing documents, including a plane ticket for Saudi Ampatuan Jr.

A search in a nearby mound of rice husks yielded a .50-cal. machine gun, a .30-cal. submachine gun, ammunition for the firearms and several camouflage uniforms for police and paramilitary personnel.

Two other .30-cal. submachine guns, a .45-cal. pistol and over 5,100 rounds for .50-cal. machine guns were also retrieved from a heap of dried coconut husks.

Searchers had gone to the mansion twice before but failed to find any weapons.

Tension momentarily gripped the area after lawyer Riolen Gillesania tried to stop the raiding team.

"This is the third time that I saw this mission order. This is illegal," Gillesania told reporters. "The martial law only covers warrantless arrests, not warrantless search and seizure," he claimed.

Ferrer maintained that the raid, prompted by "a very reliable intelligence information," was authorized under the martial law proclamation signed by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo on Dec. 4.

Ferrer, who witnessed the operation, said state forces have yet to account for over 1,000 firearms issued to paramilitary forces of the Ampatuans.

Also Thursday, members of Civilian Volunteer Organizations (CVOs) in two towns voluntarily turned in their firearms as military aircraft continued its "persuasion flights" and dropped leaflets urging gunmen to surrender.

PHILIPPINE BRIEFS

RP human rights situation getting worse, says CHR chief

MANILA, Philippines—As the world marked International Human Rights Day on Thursday, Commission on Human Rights (CHR) Chair Leila de Lima said the Nov. 23 Maguindanao massacre had trained the spotlight on the worsening situation under President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's administration that, she claimed, could nearly be comparable to the dark days of Ferdinand Marcos' dictatorship. "We cannot say it's worse today than martial law, but the human rights situation is getting worse. We were supposed to have already restored democracy, but the way things are happening, it is said that we are nearing failed-state status or ... a failed democracy," De Lima Thursday told reporters. ***(Philippine Daily Inquirer)***

Unidentified men fire at newsmen in Maguindanao

MANILA, Philippines—Unidentified men fired at a television news crew covering events in Maguindanao province that has been placed under martial rule. The crew of GMA Network's Davao affiliate was headed towards Datu Hoffer Ampatuan at around 9 a.m. when they were shot at, according to local reporter John Paul Seniel in an interview over dzBB radio. Seniel said they were going to the town hall to film a documentary. No one was hurt in the incident. The news team immediately sought assistance to the nearby military checkpoint. The attack was the second time in less than a day in the province. ***(INQUIRER.net)***

U.S. & CNMI IMMIGRATION LAW

Bruce L. Mailman & Maya B. Kara

FREE INITIAL CONSULTATION

Call for Appointment

(670) 233-0081

Law Offices of Mailman & Kara, LLC
Corner of Beach Road and Cpl. Derence Jack Rd.,
Garapan, Saipan

BRUCE L. MAILMAN is a member of the American Immigration Lawyers Association and has provided immigration services in the CNMI since 1989

MAYA B. KARA is a former CNMI Acting Attorney General, Chief Legislative Counsel, Governor's and Lt. Governor's Legal Counsel and DOL Hearing Officer

Rehired OFWs boost deployment in five years

By JEREMAIAH M. OPINIANO
OFW JOURNALISM CONSORTIUM

MANILA—Contracts for overseas work over a five-year period benefited more rehired land-based overseas Filipino workers, government data reveal.

The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) five-year data also revealed that last year, the number of re-hired land-based OFWs reached a five-year high of more than half-a-million (597,426) from less than that in 2004 (419,505).

The data further shows that on average, rehired land-based migrant workers make up nearly 46 percent of the Philippine total of deployed land- and sea-based OFWs.

POEA's 2008 Statistical Compendium, uploaded on its website only last month, said the country deployed last year a record 1.2 million OFWs.

Rehired land-based OFWs are those who returned to the country and were deployed overseas on new contracts. Four years ago, their share in the total 933,566 deployed overseas was only at nearly 45 percent (419,505).

Meanwhile, newhire land-based OFWs consistently make up 30 percent of annual OFW deployment.

Newhire workers deployed means the POEA has provided new jobs for would-be overseas workers, as securing jobs for overseas employment is part of the Macapagal-Arroyo government's strategy to generate one million new jobs for Filipinos every year since 2004.

The POEA deployed 284,912 newhire land-based OFWs in 2004. It grew by 32 percent to 376,973 last year.

The number of seafarers was decreasing in the last two years, even as the figure reached a high of 274,497 in 2006.

On a five-year average, deployed seafarers make up 24.27 percent of total OFW deployment. Rehired land-based OFWs also make up the most number of overseas work contracts processed by the POEA in 2006 to 2008, the agency's publicized data revealed.

Compared to the overseas work contracts processed by the POEA for newhire land-based OFWs and seafarers, rehires got almost all of the processed work contracts.

All processed work contracts for rehires were secured nearly a hundred percent (96.09%) or 470,390 of the total 489,528 contracts three years ago. It dipped by three percent by 2007 but swung back up to nearly 98 percent last year (or 597,426 of 610,561 work contracts).

The rehires seem to have elbowed out the newhires from the job market in 2006 as only 81.97 percent of the latter got contracts from the 387,533 new overseas work contracts made available for them that year. However, contracts for newhires last year reached a higher processing approval, having nearly 95 percent of the total 394,977 new work contracts secured by newhires.

Many work contracts for seafarers, however, remain vacant. Some 80,832 seafarers' work contracts were unfilled in 2006, and the figures reached 123,054 the year after and to 197,143 last year.

Still, the country supplies the most number of merchant marine fleet in the world with a quarter of the global total.

The POEA said it has processed more than 1.2 million work contracts for land- and sea-based jobs in 2006. The number rose by just above a hundred thousand in 2007 but nearly 1.5 million work contracts last year.

Still, there were contracts that were not supplied with workers: 162,823 in 2006, 228,254 in 2007; and, 228,282 in 2008.

Year-on-year growth rates for deployment reached their highest in 2008 for both newhire and rehired land-based OFWs (20.34 and 20.01, respectively), as a negative growth rate for seafarers' deployment is now on its second straight year.

Prior to POEA's release of its annual statistical compendium last month, some recruitment agency leaders were reported by the media as displeased at the long time of the compendium's release: nine months coming into the new year.

Last January, when POEA administrator Jennifer Manalili gave an unofficial 2008 deployment total of 1,376,823, recruitment consultant Emmanuel Geslani was quoted as saying that the rise of the total number of deployed OFWs "was unheard of in the history of OFW deployment".

In a meeting last June at the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, POEA middle-level officials said the agency revalidated all work contracts processed and workers deployed to come up with the final count of 1,236,013 deployed land- and sea-based OFWs for 2008.

Comments are welcome at editor@ofwjournalism.net.

ADB: Philippine poverty up despite economic growth

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Moderate economic growth in the Philippines in recent years did not translate to poverty reduction, which has been slower compared to the country's neighbors, said an Asian Development Bank report released Thursday.

Household poverty rose by 2.5 percentage points to 26.9 percent from 2003 to 2006, and the number of poor people swelled by nearly 4 million people to 27.6 million despite an average domestic economic growth rate of 5.3 percent for the period, it said.

The level of inequality among Filipinos—who currently number around 90 million today—has hardly changed for more than 20 years and remains high compared to other countries in Asia, limiting the beneficial impact of economic growth on poverty, said the study.

The report also said the Philippine poverty reduction rate of 0.47 percent per year between 1990 to 2005 was slower than in Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam, adding that only in the Philippines has the overall number of poor people increased during that period.

The Manila-based lender said to blame are low to moderate economic growth for the past 40 years, high population growth, weakness in job generation, failure to fully develop agriculture, recurrent conflicts and natural disasters.

AP

Residents who were displaced by the recent floodings in the capital receive blankets, cash and food supplies from the Chinese Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation during relief distribution to some 1,000 families at the flood-stricken city of Marikina east of Manila, Philippines Thursday Nov. 19, 2009.

The ADB said there was a need to enhance government's strategy to address vulnerability and shocks, tackle chronic poverty and define pathways out of poverty.

Serious attention must be given to population management, reforming institutions that implement poverty programs, and raising more funds to address needs.

Official data on poverty used in the ADB report are measured and released by the government every three years. The latest report was in 2006.

ADB said there was a need to enhance the quality and timeliness of data and that methods used by the government may be underestimating poverty in the country.

TAKE CHARGE

Can I afford to stop working?

Editors Note: This is part of Take Charge of Your Money, a partnership between INQUIRER.net and Citibank to help readers handle their personal finances well.

Question: I have been wanting to spend more time with my family and start a small business to continue to earn some income. Every time I feel I am ready to quit work, something comes up that will make me hesitate and then I will postpone my plans. Right now, I think I have enough money saved up to cover for unforeseen expenses. But how do I really know if my savings are enough? Is there a good formula to check against?—Susan

Answer: Many people who have been working for a long time are looking forward to when they can ditch their usual routine of braving the traffic to get to work at 8 a.m. each day. Whether you call it burnout or mid-life crisis or just a welcome change—such a move is appealing.

Getting out of the rat race to stay at home or go into business will need a lot of preparation though, and this is why many choose to continue working. Quitting work means the loss of a steady and guaranteed income stream so before taking the big leap, one must ensure that he has enough saved to help him cover his cost of living until he is ready to go to work again or go into business.

How much money do you need to have to say that you have enough saved, affording you to quit work? There is no exact figure for this as it depends on your personal lifestyle. Some experts say a fund equivalent to two years' worth of expenses is sufficient. Others would say a fund that will generate interest income in the same amount as your present salary would be the rule.

That would seem like a tall order. Before going any further, ask yourself if quitting work is what you really want to do. Weigh the advantages and disadvantages of working vs. staying home. If you still think that resigning from work is for you, determine the proper timetable for doing it. If you haven't built up enough savings yet, maybe it would be best to postpone that move for a few more years in order for you to increase your savings.

Spend some time analyzing your current financial situation and do a personal balance sheet. Do an "inventory" of your assets and list down their value, from bank deposits and investments to receivables, properties, jewelry and the like. How much are your total assets? Next, write down all your liabilities (credit card debt, mortgage, and other payables) and deduct them from your total assets. You will arrive at your net worth, which may be positive or negative. This figure is how much you are worth right now. Is this amount enough for you at this current stage in your life? If not, maybe you should remain in the workforce for now. But if it is enough, then that is a good sign.

If you are decided on giving up your work next year, here are a few tips on how to make your fund last longer to sustain your lifestyle for many years:

1 Invest your money in investments such as bonds and government securities that may give you a steady regular income higher than that offered by bank deposits. Bear in mind that bonds and government securities are not entirely risk free. Talk to a financial expert at an investment company or your bank to see if bond funds are suited to your risk appetite.

2 Consider living a simpler lifestyle. Some people even sell their homes and move to a smaller one as they move to retirement or semi-retirement. They also move to a place where the cost of living may be lower. Look at your lifestyle and identify things you can let go of (example: annual trip abroad, eating out weekly, or an extra car) in order to make your fund last longer.

3 Make a budget. This will be your guide to spending to ensure that you don't burn up your fund fast. Aim to spend within your means.

4 Find other sources of income. Staying home doesn't mean not earning at all. Think of an activity that you enjoy doing and see if you can earn income from it. If it is something you like doing, and you can do it at home at leisure, it won't be like work. Examples of suchactivities are dog breeding, growing orchids or bonsais, or baking. Another option is to do consultancies which you can do at your own time.

5 Continue saving. As you find work you can do from home, continue saving at least 10 percent of your income, and investing this. Diversify your investments.

6 Let the family in on the whole effort. Explain to your family that you need to live simply so you can continue staying at home with them. Get their cooperation, then as a family, find ways to bond and have recreation without having to spend so much.

The decision to resign from work is a big move that will change your life. Make sure you have thought things over and planned for the future before taking the plunge. We wish you the best.

INQUIRER.net and Citibank invite readers to ask questions regarding financial matters. Send your questions to personal_finance@inquirer.net or comment through our personal finance blog called MoneySmarts. Readers are solely responsible for their own investment decisions and should thus conduct their own research and due diligence and obtain professional advice. INQUIRER.net will not be liable for any loss or damage caused by a reader's reliance on information obtained from our web site.

Maharlika – PinoyStyle

Velasquez's new line: Stand-up comic

RUSHES

Celeb, politico spotted in 5-star hotel

By THE INQUIRER ENTERTAINMENT STAFF
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—Controversial celebrity used to be the BFF of the Girl Friend of Big Politico.

Then GF and BP figured in an ugly skirmish, with GF seeking help from…everywhere, saying she had long been battered by BP, who claimed she was unfaithful.

It was the perfect opportunity for CC to console BP.

CC and BP were spotted checking into a five-star hotel recently.

They must've suddenly realized how they could fill the void in their respective lives. FP wanted affirmation; CC was in dire need of moolah, says a spy.

But why would CC be in financial straits, when a superrich man adores her?

Not to blame, but still …

There's idle chatter that Major Star of a TV network has parted ways with Pretty Girlfriend—a teleserye star with a speech impediment—who allegedly suffocated the guy with jealousy-induced tantrums.

Sweet Ingénue, MS' new screen partner, isn't to blame. SI is smitten with Glib Celeb, a TV host, insists a mole.

Then again, SI can somehow be blamed for the MS-PG breakup there seems to be some really big plans for SI's successful tandem with MS.

First love never dies

The opportunity to work with her First Boyfriend, a rock star who left his band to go solo, was presented to Actress-Singer.

FB is not as dashingly handsome as her present screen partners, but AS seemed a bit too excited about the reunion.

It only goes to show that first love never dies.

Susan Boyle still on top

LONDON—Scottish singer and Internet sensation Susan Boyle remained at the top of the British pop charts for a second week on Sunday with her debut album "I Dreamed A Dream."

The collection of songs from the 48-year-old church volunteer, who shot to fame on the TV talent show "Britain's Got Talent," has sold over 700,000 copies in just two weeks, the Official Charts Company said.

The album is already the third best-selling of the year after becoming the largest global CD pre-order in the 14-year history of Amazon.com.

■ ■ ■ ■

Top of the talk shows

For those who missed last weekend's gabfests on TV. (And why we are moved, if we are moved.)

Gretchen Barretto on her life, career and a possible acting award: "Every day limang rosaryo ang dinarasal ko. Every week talaga nasa Baclaran ako … Dinarasal ko po ang aking teleserye, career. Kaya po huwag kayong magulat at magiging active talaga ako sa mundo ng TV." (Lima? As in?)

Hayden Kho on the revocation of his physician's license due to his sex videos: "I am really hoping that they will just suspend me because pinaghirapan ko 'yung license. Alam naman nila 'yan, doktor din kasi sila. What happened to me … in my personal life … it has nothing to do with my practice of medicine." (The right hand isn't supposed to know what the left hand is doing?)

Gina Alajar on the TV broadcast of a message she posted on her Facebook account about the alleged Pacman-Krista affair: "On Nov. 15, 2009, the show biz magazine show 'The Buzz' featured in its segment 'POV' my Facebook page, quoting and showing onscreen my shout-out posted a few days before … If the producers and writers of 'The Buzz' had only been more prudent, this issue would not have been blown out of proportion. I stand by my earlier assertion that 'The Buzz' has violated my right to privacy and I hold the show's manager accountable for the aggravation this has brought me and my family." ('The Buzz' has not issued an official statement, but one of its hosts, Boy Abunda, said in a news website interview that the show will not apologize.)

Sharon Cuneta on her failure to secure her late father Pablo Cuneta's inheritance: "Hanggang ngayon galit ako … I mean, may kinikita naman ako, e. Ang mommy ko, hindi naman nagbago ang lifestyle. Pero marami akong kapatid na dine-deserve sana nila [yung pera]. I'm sure pinag-ipunan at pinaghirapan ng tatay ko 'yun para sa aming lahat. Ang nangyari, iba ang yumaman." ***(Startalk, The Buzz, Showbiz Central, Rated K)***

By BAYANI SAN DIEGO JR.
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Regine Velasquez didn't know how to interact with the 800 typhoon victims and heroes invited to the taping of the GMA 7 Christmas special, "After the Rain."

She told Inquirer Entertainment, "I had a sore throat, but I did my stand-up routine to make them laugh. I think they had fun."

The Kapuso channel gathered the special guests from evacuation centers in Rizal, Laguna, Pasig, Marikina and Pangasinan, and treated them to a preshow dinner party and free concert with Regine, Kuh Ledesma, Jaya, JayR, Kyla, among others, at the network's Studio 7.

The two-hour special, directed by Louie Ignacio (airing Sunday), features the stories of Tropical Storm "Ondoy" survivors Jessie Arnaez, Elly and KY Pablo and the orphans of the House of Refuge.

"We hope to uplift and inspire others through their experiences," said Regine. "More than losing possessions, losing hope is a bigger tragedy."

During the making of the special, she said, she witnessed with her own eyes the world-renowned resilience of the Filipino spirit.

"Christmas will push through for the survivors, as it always does for us, no matter what happens," Regine said. "Food will fill their stomachs, but what we want to do, is reach out to their hearts and souls and bring light back into their lives."

Regine Velasquez

Regine didn't sit idly in the aftermath of the killer typhoon. With one assistant, she bought enough groceries and supplies to fill up truckloads. "I didn't even consider how I would distribute them. I just knew I had to get bottled water for the adults and milk for the kids."

She called up friends Mikee Cojuangco-Jaworksi and Herbert Bautista for help, and the grocery items were distributed to evacuation centers in Pasig and Quezon City.

Regine is also proud of boyfriend Ogie Alcasid's efforts, through the "Kaya Natin 'To" CD and concert. "I'm so happy that the concert and album were successful. That was his vision. He broke all the barriers."

For a while, there was no network war, she noted. "All artists were united, helping the victims. All the proceeds will go to Gawad Kalinga."

'Bro' parties with media friends

By MARINEL CRUZ
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—Eight-year-old child actor Zaijian "Santino" Jaranilla joined the "Kapamilya Krismas Party para sa Press" at the Dolphy Theater inside the ABS-CBN Compound on Monday night, which was highlighted by a contest inspired by his top-rating drama series, "May Bukas Pa."

Zaijian read top two winners of the first-ever "Prayer Para Kay Bro" contest. Cash prizes went to columnists Emy Abuan (P10,000, 1st) and Pilar Mateo (P5,000, 2nd).

Santino, the character that turned Zaijian into a household name, is an orphan raised by a priest in the fictional town Bagong Pag-asa. He finds a friend in "Bro" (Jesus Christ), who gives him the ability to heal the sick and disabled.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ABS-CBN

Zaijian Jaranilla

For the Monday event, a prayer wall was mounted outside the Dolphy Theater entrance. It featured all 33 prayers that the Kapamilya network received as entries, said Corporate Communications head Bong R. Osorio, who served as the evening's Big Bro.

Entertainment reporters competed in a talent contest based on the network's newest reality program, "Showtime." The jurors were "Showtime" regulars Dimples Romana and Amy Perez, plus comedian Brod Pete.

Ever the jester, Brod Pete described one group's performance as, "World-class, pero pang third world." Amy, dumbfounded at one point, could only comment on a contestant's "nice pair of legs."

Several network artists entertained the guests. Vina Morales sang a rousing medley of '70s dance hits, MYX VJ Hunt winner Nel Gomez dished out the latest R&B ditties, Mackoy Fundales sang "Pinoy Tayo" and Nyoy Volante performed several Christmas tunes.

But the act that brought the house down was a dance number that featured Bro, his Corporate Communications team and a handful of entertainment editors. They were cheered from start to finish, the resulting din drowning out the tunes played, including the Korean radio hit, "Nobody, Nobody But You."

Comedian Kitkat, radio DJ Laila and comic Ahwel Paz shared hosting chores. A total of P170,000 worth of gifts were raffled away. Singers Rachel Alejandro, Lance Raymundo and Ronnie Liang, Valerie Concepcion and a number of former PBB contestants, helped pick out the winners.

Patriotism, not politics for Ogie

By DOLLY ANNE CARVAJAL
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Ogie Alcasid is glad about the success of the "Kaya Natin Ito" concert which lasted for seven and a half hours non-stop.

"Gawad Kalinga and OPM have forged a partnership to help storm victims," he says. "It touched my heart to see the performers give their time, wealth and talent so unselfishly."

Since he's giving his all to show his love of country, doesn't he plan to take it to the next level and run for public office? "Never in my wildest dreams," he quips. "I don't know anything about politics. I believe what is more important is to really value the true ideals of patriotism. It may be difficult under the current circumstances but it's the best time to show it."

If there's anything Ogie is good at showing, it's his unconditional support for his ex Michelle Van Eimerren and her new hubby Mark. He gave them an iMac as a wedding gift. Ogie and GF Regine's presence at Michelle and Mark's wedding was the best present of all.

■ ■ ■ ■

Dennis Trillo and child star Francis Magundayao top-bill a different kind of Christmas special in GMA 7's "SRO Cinemaserye: Exchange Gift" every Thursday starting Dec. 10 after "Shining Inheritance" on the Telebabad block.

Dennis Trillo

Dens portrays Miguel who is a workaholic. His life is turned upside down when he gets stuck as the legal guardian of his nephew EJ (Francis).

They don't get along well so Miguel decides to bring EJ to an orphanage. On their way to the shelter, they keep bickering and accidentally shove Santa Claus. Because of their bad behavior, Santa magically switched their bodies to teach them a lesson. Miguel ends up in EJ's body while EJ is locked up in Miguel's torso.

If Dens could become somebody else for a day, who would he choose to be? "Fedor Emelianenko," he says. "I want to experience what it's like to be the greatest mixed martial arts fighter in the world."

In the show, he's a reluctant father. But in real life, Dens savors being a dad to his love child Calyx. "He's hyper, maldaldal, super bright," Dens beams. "He loves to dance, sing, wrestle and play video games. I love being with him. Last year was my fave Christmas because it was my first one with my son. Even if I have no one to keep me warm this Christmas, it's more than enough that I have my son to hug."

■ ■ ■ ■

Ronaldo Valdez totally cracked me up when I interviewed him. Now I know where Janno Gibbs got his wacky side. Ronaldo is more than delighted to be Ensure Gold's "golden guy."

Does he still need Viagra even if he already takes the milk supplement? "I never had problems in that department," he said with a naughty grin. "I remember Eddie Garcia told me that kung ayaw ni Manoy, eh di ayaw!"

Did he also get entangled with many women during his younger years like his son Janno? "I had my time," he recalled, laughing. "What made me mellow was when FPJ advised me na kung wala naman akong balak pakasalan, 'wag ko ng pakialaman."

How's Janno and Bing's marriage now? "I don't ask," he replied. "They still live together. Convenient ang set-up nila because they have two condo units next to each other. 'Pag war, sa kabilang unit muna ang isa (laughs)."

Maharlika – Opinyon

EDITORIAL

Troubling

The Constitution is a post-Marcos document; that is to say, the framers installed safeguards based on bitter lessons learned during the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos. They did not reckon, however, with the danger posed by a supine Congress. But who could blame them? It is difficult to imagine, a mere generation after the ouster of the Marcoses ended the dark days of military rule, that we would be served by a Congress that is completely indifferent to the imposition of martial law.

At first, Speaker Prospero Nograles belittled the very idea of a joint session of Congress to consider the revocation of Proclamation 1959. The joint session is called only to revoke a proclamation of martial law, Nograles asserted. Why convoke it when the majority of congressmen are already in favor of the proclamation?

The notion that calling a joint session within 48 hours of the declaration of martial law was an express order of the Constitution did not seem to cross the former human rights lawyer's mind. At least until better lawyers advised him otherwise.

Then, the fourth highest official of the land sought to portray the preparations for the historic joint session as a game of protocol, a race for privilege, between the House of Representatives and the much-smaller Senate. The rules the two chambers agreed upon last Monday Nograles seemed to treat like a mere set of dutiful concessions.

Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile, the martial law administrator under Marcos, struck much the same, urgency-less tone. He quibbled, for instance, about the definition of the 48-hour period. Did the Constitution contemplate the inclusion of Sundays? We found this an unusual position to take. In the first place, it is a well-settled principle that where the Constitution does not distinguish, lawyers should not add, or multiply, distinctions. Secondly, the issue is martial law and the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus—a matter of the gravest importance.

Finally, both Enrile and Nograles set a schedule for the joint session that can fairly and accurately be described as leisurely. In their schedule, deliberations on the martial law proclamation can last until Dec. 15. Where, the public wants to know, is the sense of urgency that the constitutional issue demands?

Even the valid question raised by Congress' pestering gadfly, Maguindanao Rep. Didagen Dilangalen, Enrile saw fit to answer peremptorily. Where was President Macapagal-Arroyo? Shouldn't she at least give Congress the courtesy of showing up at the joint session, to make her constitutionally mandated report?

No, Enrile said. No need—thus missing the history-shaping opportunity to set the bar high for the exercise of the President's martial law power. Indeed, this is the troubling thing about the run-up to and the actual conduct of the joint session: Where our honorable legislators faced a choice between the most stringent standards and mere puwede na, they settled, each time, for the low and mediocre.

© Philippine Daily Inquirer

Who's afraid of Rep. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo?

There's The Rub

By CONRADO DE QUIROS

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Was there ever any doubt she'd cling on?

I've gotten hoarse shouting it from the rooftops, feeling at some point like Cassandra given the gift of prophecy and the curse of not being believed. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo herself justifies her decision to run as representative in this wise, or unwise: "Public service is emblazoned on my DNA."

One can imagine many things imprinted on Arroyo's DNA, but public service is not one of them. Greed is so, a greed so clasping, grasping, and clutching that nothing is too low for her to stoop down to. Ambition is so, a need for power so vast, so overpowering, so vital to her being that she cannot for one second live without it. Her voice is so, nobody even bothering to ask whether it was really her caught on tape plotting with Virgilio Garcillano to kidnap a public school teacher in Tawi-Tawi, the raspy croak with the kolehiyala accent being so distinctive, so DNA-imprinted, so her for anyone to think otherwise.

The slings and arrows of outraged fortune came flying thick and fast. "As president, Arroyo will hold the power and funds to crush the opposition," said Nene Pimentel. "She is drunk with power; I think she needs professional help," said Teddy Casiño. "Her ultimate goal is to become House speaker and ram through Charter change; (she wants) to render Noynoy's victory useless," said Mar Roxas. "I am not surprised; she is still motivated by political survival at all costs," said Kiko Pangilinan.

I agree that Arroyo is everything that these statements say she is. And I agree that Arroyo will do everything that these statements say she will. But I disagree—and this is truly important—that all this represents any great threat today.

When I was warning shrilly about Arroyo dragging the country to hell first before she allowed herself to be dragged away from the throne room, she was still in a position to drag the country to hell. I have little doubt she will still try to. But I have just as little doubt she won't get far. Not today, not after the sea change that has happened to the country. She will thrash about, she will curse about, she will banzai or bonsai about, but none of it will do her any good. She will continue to screw the country, but she will not benefit from it. She will continue to screw the country, but she won't prevent her downfall from it.

The notion that she can escape prosecution by becoming representative is silly. Being a representative does not give immunity for crimes over and beyond the call of self-preservation. Arroyo didn't just steal money—though that is staggering enough in itself: Erap only made it as the 10th biggest crook in world in Transparency International, she should make it to third, after Suharto and Marcos—she stole the vote. Arroyo didn't just steal the vote—though that is staggering enough in itself: she turned the electoral exercise, as nobody had done since Marcos, into a minor calisthenics, voters trekking to the polls to fill out ballots that would not be counted—she stole lives. She not only stole lives—though that is staggering enough in itself, ushering as it did the culture of impunity, which is really a pale phrase to describe the murder of crows or the slaughter of the innocents or the gunning down of suspects and burying them in shallow graves—she stole everything else. She stole this country's hope, she stole this country's spirit, she stole this country's life.

Being congressman did not save Romeo Jalosjos from jail for the rape of a minor. Being congresswoman will not save Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo from jail for the rape of a nation.

The notion that Arroyo will be in a position to win friends and influence people, least of all the congressmen, is even sillier. It is the product of having at once too much imagination and too little. Too much imagination because it presumes that even if she became speaker of the House, and even if she became as powerful as Jose de Venecia once was, she would continue to dictate the course of this country. Look where De Venecia is now.

And too little imagination because it fails to grasp what happens when one is out of power, which is what no longer being the president is. You stop being top dog, you lose everything. One would think that should be obvious from the defections violently rocking Lakas-Kampi-CMD today with Gibo's miserable showing. While Arroyo is still president—or so in title if not in vote.

In fact, it wasn't the Muslims who invented "political entrepreneurship," it was the Christians. It wasn't the warlords of the south who discovered that the best way to keep power was to be a source of beneficence to your supporters, while trumping your enemies in heinousness and firepower, a logic the Ampatuans merely drove to hellish heights. It was the political clans of the north, recognizing early on that the only way to control wealth was to control power, and the only way to keep power was to distribute loot to supporters, while trumping your enemies in force and armed might, a logic Marcos and Arroyo merely drove to sublime depths.

Without the loot and lard of Malacañang, how can Arroyo keep anyone in leash, least of all the congressmen whose emblem consists of an outstretched open palm with the motto, "Your credibility is good, but we need cash"?

And all of this forgets the change that has made this country unrecognizable since Aug. 5. Since that watershed, GMA's fortune has plunged faster than a torpedoed WWII ship in the Atlantic. The lucky SOB has run out of luck she should thank whoever it is she thanks that her malas hasn't rubbed off on Manny Pacquiao. Arroyo is through, Arroyo is finished. Arroyo is dead. The massacre wreaked by her allies, the Ampatuans, in Maguindanao just drove the last nail on her coffin.

Who's afraid of Rep. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo?

Photographs

Looking Back

By AMBETH OCAMPO

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Even if you carry one of these supposedly tamper-proof, machine-readable e-passports you will still be subjected to close biometric scrutiny in airports abroad. Some airport immigration counters capture your photograph, others take fingerprints, the more hi-tech ones scan your retina. Some day, as they do in science fiction films, everyone will be identified with the most fool-proof marker of identity: DNA.

Photographs and photography came to the Philippines in the late 19th century making it easier for historians to recreate the past. Because of some visual record, we know what the Philippines was like then, we know how people dressed, we even know what our heroes looked like. Faces that figured in the making of the nation were preserved in photographs and converted into stamps, coins and paper bills: Jose Rizal, Andres Bonifacio, Emilio Aguinaldo and the other Founding Fathers. Aside from Gregoria de Jesus, Lakambini of the Katipunan; Marcela Agoncillo, who directed the sewing of the first Philippine flag; Melchora Aquino, who sheltered and fed the weary Katipuneros; and Emilio Aguinaldo's first wife who was photographed on horseback, we have little record of the Founding Mothers of the nation. We have photographs of Rizal's mother, and even Aguinaldo's mother who was carried all over during the Revolution in a hammock lest she be captured by the enemy and used to lure her son into a trap. What about the Founding Grandmothers and Founding Grandfathers of the nation?

Perhaps the most documented hero we have is Rizal who was photographed throughout his life, from age 14 as an Ateneo student to the split second before he was shot dead in Bagumbayan. Bonifacio is remembered for only one photograph and in it the Great Plebeian, the hero of the masses, is not wearing the white camisa de chino and rolled-up, screaming red Kundiman pants, he is garbed in a black suit with a white tie!

Aguinaldo outlived everyone in the Revolution, so there are photographs of him as an idealistic young revolutionary and up to the time he was feeble. He was wheeled out each year for Independence Day, a shriveled historical relic.

We only have two photographs of Rizal's older brother Paciano who rose to become a general in Aguinaldo's army. (He refused to be photographed to escape arrest during troubled times.) One photo was taken without his knowledge in his Los Baños home before World War II, the other is a gruesome picture taken when he was inside a coffin in 1930 (by then he could not complain).

Graciano Lopez Jaena, editor of Solidaridad, is another historical figure with only one photograph. This may be bad for historians, but it saved his life at the time. According to Jose Lopez of Iloilo, grandnephew of Lopez-Jaena, the anti-clerical writer and orator was warned to leave the country for his own good. He took a boat from Iloilo to Manila and onward to Spain disguised as a waiter. It is said that the friars who denounced Lopez-Jaena loitered in piers ready to point him out for arrest. His disguise was so good that he even served the friars without being recognized. (How come nobody asked for identification or a passport? This may be another fairy tale but it is an amusing story.)

A similar story is told by Marcela Agoncillo in her book "Reminiscences of the Agoncillo Family." Her father Felipe escaped arrest, not by disguising himself but rather his wife Marcela pretended to be a maid. A guardia civil knocked at their door in Taal, Batangas, and asked to see Agoncillo, and fortunately, it was Marcela who was at the door. Sensing something amiss she replied, "Please wait a while, I will ask Mrs. Agoncillo if Mr. Agoncillo is in." (How on earth can you mistake the lady of the house for the maid? Why was the lady of the house opening doors?) Anyway, Marcela went up slowly and warned her husband about the caller. Felipe then summoned all the servants up into his room, fearful that in such a tense atmosphere one of the help would break down and identify him. Marcela Agoncillo returned to the door and calmly told the guardia civil that her señora said Mr. Agoncillo was in Manila attending the carnival and that if it was an important matter, he was welcome to wait until he returned home. So the guardia civil left, saying he would be back later. That done, Felipe slipped out of the house a free man.

The above story reminded me of my uncle's mayordoma of many years. She answered the phone one day and the caller asked to speak with Mr. Ocampo. "Sino pong Mr. Ocampo ang gusto nyong makausap? Ang lalaki o ang babae? (Which Mr. Ocampo do you want to speak with, the husband or the wife?)," she asked.

The last anecdote comes from Julio Nakpil, composer of the Revolution and second husband of Gregoria de Jesus: Fr. Pedro Dandan, a Katipunero, was on his way out of the house when he met the secret police. They asked for Father Dandan, not knowing they were speaking to him. Father Dandan replied, "He is upstairs eating breakfast." As the detectives went up the house quietly, Father Dandan took the same taxi that brought the detective to his place.

In recent times we have the last moments of Ninoy Aquino on the plane caught on video. Soldiers come in to arrest him and the first one walks past him. A history of escapes in Philippine history will make engaging reading.

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu.

Maharlika – Samu't Sari

HEARING HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

From left, Commonwealth Utilities Corp. executive director Tony Muna, Abe Malae, and Bruce Megarr provide testimony before the Public Utilities and Infrastructure Committee of the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation on Capital Hill Thursday morning.

HIV AWARENESS NMC

Students of the Northern Marianas College take time between busy schedules to grab pamphlets containing information about the spread and prevention of HIV at an awareness booth set up by the Department of Public Health and Napu Life, a non-profit organization. Aside from the booth pictured here, HIV testing by way of saliva samples was also conducted.

KHS JROTC CADETS SHOW CHRISTMAS SPIRIT CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Kagman high school cadets show their Christmas spirits by collecting canned goods to donate to needy families on Saipan. KHS cadets have been collecting canned goods since November to donate to the Karidat Foundation for the Christmas food drive. They amassed over 300 canned goods. "We hope it'll bring joy to several families and show some Christmas spirit. Happy Holidays from Kagman High School Ayuyu Battalion, JROTC."

CNMI QUARTER HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

A crowd of at least a thousand, mostly children, turn out for the launching of the CNMI commemorative quarter-dollar coins at the American Memorial Park in Garapan Thursday morning. The United States Mint says 76 million CNMI quarter coins are now in circulation in the U.S. economy.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial is surrounded by young students who received from him CNMI commemorative quarter-dollar coins at the American Memorial Park in Garapan Thursday morning. The CNMI commemorative quarter-dollar is the sixth and final coin in the U.S. Mint 2009 District of Columbia and U.S. Territories Quarters Program.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos and students show the CNMI commemorative quarter-dollar coins launched at the American Memorial Park in Garapan Thursday morning.

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT

Happy birthday greetings go out to Sowm Kaipat May the Lord bless you always and we pray that you will have many more birthdays to come. Greetings come from the whole familias.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Happy, happy birthday to Socorro Huliganga! May this special day of your life be filled with blessings of peace, happiness, good health, and wonderful memories. Greetings coming from your husband Crispin, your family, and the Fiesta F&B Team!

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Happy birthday greetings go out to Schuito Kaipat, who is celebrating her birthday today in Whidbey Island, Oak Harbor, Washington. May you have many more birthdays to come! Greetings come from the whole familias.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

PGFC CHAMP

Congratulations to Marione Elesse Corpus for consistently garnering first place in the October, November, and December editions of the Primary Grade Forensic Competition in the Duo Dramatic Interpretation category (with Stephen Rem Bartolo), and again garnering first place in the Solo Dramatic Interpretation category for December. Marione is a student of the Golden Harvest International School. Your parents, school, teachers, and classmates are proud of you.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

YoungStyle

Teaching kids etiquette

By MARI-JANE WILLIAMS
SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON POST

Along with the joy of holiday gatherings comes a fear of your child doing something egregious at the table: chewing with his mouth open, burping the first half of the alphabet, constructing a volcano with her mashed potatoes.

Some parents might be squeamish about having relatives over for a holiday dinner or taking the kids' table act on the road. But local and national etiquette experts say it's never too late to brush up on the basics so that everyone in the family puts his best utensil forward during big family meals.

The key is to make the expectations appropriate for your child's age and to show kids how manners are relevant to them, the experts say. Then they will be more motivated to learn the specifics of napkin-and-utensil use or the rule that you should always pass to the right when serving food at the beginning of the meal.

"I like to tell kids ages 6 to 8 that I see manners doing two things for them," said Cindy Post Senning, director of the Emily Post Institute and co-author of "The Gift of Good Manners: A Parent's Guide to Raising Respectful, Kind, Considerate Children," (HarperResource, 2002). "First, they let them know what to do so they don't embarrass themselves. And the other is that table manners are ... intended to let us know what is expected."

Parents often wonder how long they should expect their child to be able to sit at a table, said Jennifer Ricciardi, director of the Lifestyle Finishing School in Burke, Va. Her advice: Multiply the child's age by three to set the standard. A 3-year-old might only be able to tolerate nine minutes of holiday dining, but an 8-year-old's threshold would be closer to 25 minutes.

To get ready for the holidays, the experts suggest trying to have a few family meals each week — it doesn't have to be dinner — to brush up on the basics. Then have a couple of dry runs of a more formal meal to practice the manners that are most important in your family.

"Kids need to practice," said Janis Brown, founder of the Etiquette School of Greater Washington, D.C. "A lot of kids have food put on their plates and then they are put in front of the TV. Who's watching how they eat? It's too bad, because it's a wonderful time for families to be together and to talk."

Parents need to remember that disruptions in routine and schedule can be overwhelming for little ones. Plan ahead to make sure they get the rest and nourishment they need while the family is traveling or playing host. This will help them succeed when the pressure's on.

"You really need to build in some times for natural rest," Senning said. "It's unfair to ask kids to be crisp and with it when they're exhausted."

Top Table Manners for Ages 4 to 7

(c) 2009, The Washington Post

- Put your napkin in your lap.
- Have a clean face and hands when you sit down at the table.
- Use your napkin to wipe food off your face.
- Start eating when everyone else does or when you've been told it's OK.
- Stay seated and sit upright.
- Keep elbows off the table while eating.
- Chew with your mouth closed.
- Say "please," instead of reaching for things or demanding. "Please" turns a demand into a request, so you want to use it all the time.
- Ask to be excused and say "thank you."
- Offer to help clear the table.

SOURCE: Emily Post Institute

Improve food safety; kids and OTC medicine

By CHARITY BROWN
(C) 2009, THE WASHINGTON POST

Is our food safe? We all remember the salmonella outbreaks in peanuts, jalapenos and tomatoes. Certainly our food is safer than it was 100 years ago, says Arthur Allen, author of "Ripe: The Search for the Perfect Tomato," but, when foods are mishandled, they can cause illness or even death. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 76 million Americans get food poisoning a year. Here are a few basic tips that everyone should follow:

■ Wash your hands with warm soapy water for at least 20 seconds before preparing or consuming food.

■ Defrost food in the fridge, cold water or the microwave but never on the counter.

■ Don't eat meat, poultry, eggs, sliced fresh fruit or vegetables that have been left out for more than two hours (one hour in temperatures hotter than 90 F).

Go to EatingWell.com's "10 Commandments for Food Safety" for more and check out Allen's article, "The Unusual Suspects."

■■■

The holiday season ushers in winter and that means more colds for kids and possibly the flu. As parents, your first instinct may be to stock up on over-the-counter medicine to treat symptoms such as sore throats and coughs. But be careful: Last year, safety concerns prompted drug manufacturers to change cough and cold medicine labels that stated medicines should not be given to children under the age of 2. The new age is 4.

To keep kids safe, the CDC offers these tips:

DO:

■ Read labels carefully.

■ Take note of the ingredients in any medicine you give your child.

■ Throw away old cold and cough medicines labeled for children under age 4.

DO NOT:

■ Give your kid two (or more) medicines that contain the same ingredients.

■ Tell your child that medicine is candy.

■ Leave medicine where your child can reach it; i.e., the refrigerator or low cabinets.

■ Take your (adult) medicine in front of your kid.

Why you feel cold when you have a fever

By HOWARD BENNETT
Special to The Washington Post

Since this is cold and flu season, there's a good chance that someone in your family has had a fever in the past few weeks. Having a fever can make you feel miserable and creates some odd sensations. Instead of feeling hot, people with fever usually feel cold. They also may experience chills, rapid breathing and muscle aches. Patients can even wake up in a pool of sweat as the fever breaks.

Body temperature results from a balance between the heat generated by our cells and the heat "lost" to the environment. Heat created by our cells comes from the energy used to keep us alive. Heat is lost through our skin and the air we breathe out. Human beings have an average temperature of 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit. The brain monitors body temperature and controls our bodies to keep our temperature within the normal range.

If the brain detects a drop in temperature, it directs the body to make a number of changes to correct the imbalance. Those changes include increasing heat production within the body (by shivering, for example) and reducing heat loss to the environment.

If the brain senses a rise in temperature, the opposite changes occur. This is accomplished by increasing blood flow to the skin, breathing faster and by sweating. (When your sweat evaporates, it cools the body.)

If you get a fever, it's because your brain has told your body to get hotter. There's evidence that many germs don't thrive as well if you have a fever, so fever could be a way the body protects itself when you're ill. Medicine can make fevers drop (until the medicine wears off), but it's not always effective.

Lots of parents worry that fever is harmful, but the fever that accompanies illness is not dangerous. Doctors are concerned when kids develop fevers, but we are concerned about the cause of the fever rather than the temperature itself. We treat fever to make children more comfortable (which in turn makes them more willing to drink and stay hydrated), not because it's essential to reduce the fever.

So the next time you're sick, do yourself and your parents a favor by resting, drinking lots of fluids and eating when you can. Oh, and don't forget: A spoonful of sugar (and a little TV) helps the medicine go down!

Stories worth a closer look

By FRED BOWEN
Special to The Washington Post

Bowen is the author of 11 kids' sports books. His latest are "Touchdown Trouble" and "Soccer Team Upset."

Because I write a weekly sports column, kids and their parents ask, "How do you find something to write about every week?"

It's easy. There's always something new happening in sports. In fact, the hard part is to choose what I want to write about. So this week I thought I would write about some recent sports-related stuff that didn't make it into my columns.

Hooray for the University of Maryland for keeping Ralph Friedgen as its head football coach. I know the Terrapins had a disappointing 2009 season, with a record of two wins and 10 losses. But because of Friedgen's contract with the university, the school would have had to pay him millions of dollars if it had fired him.

I think it's crazy for colleges to pay football coaches so much money. The average Division I college football coach makes more than $1 million a year. But it is even crazier to pay coaches NOT to coach.

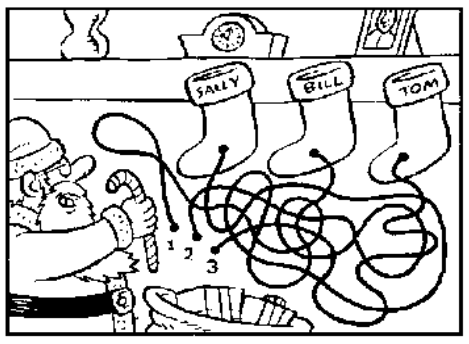
Congratulations to the Maryland field hockey team. The Terps were the Atlantic Coast Conference champs and had a record of 23-1 this season. Their only loss was a heartbreaker in the finals of the NCAA tournament, when North Carolina beat them, 3-2, on a goal with less than a minute to play. But one loss shouldn't ruin a great season.

Speaking of goals, did you see the goal that helped France beat Ireland and get into the 2010 World Cup? French star Thierry Henry clearly touched the ball with his hand before he passed it to a teammate who scored the winning goal. As any kid who plays soccer knows, it's against the rules to touch the ball with your hands.

The problem was that the referee didn't see the hand ball. Henry admitted that he'd touched the ball — by accident. He even said the fairest thing would have been for France and Ireland to replay the game. I agree. But it's too late now. France is in and Ireland is out of the 2010 World Cup. (The United States is also in the world's biggest soccer tournament, which begins in South Africa in June.)

And finally, while watching football recently, I have seen several ads for the new video game "Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2." I think it's sad that adults and some kids (even though the game is rated Mature 17+) play something that makes war into a game. I don't know much about war, but I'm sure it is no game.

So you see, there is always plenty to write about in sports.

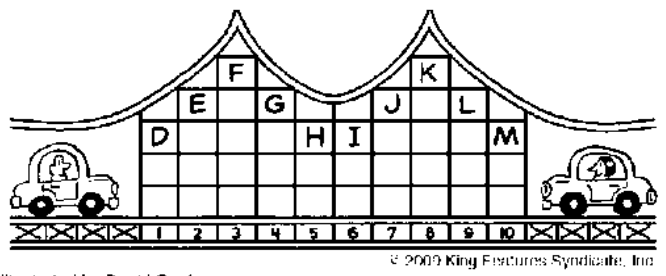


WHO GETS THE CANDY CANE? Santa's about to toss his last candy cane into one of the above stockings. You have one chance to guess who will get it.

Answer: Tom (No. 3) is the lucky one.

Junior Whirl

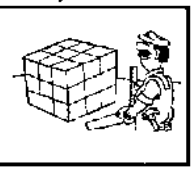
by Charles Barry Townsend



© 2009 King Features Syndicate, Inc.

Illustrated by David Coulson

A MANY-SIDED PROBLEM! A large cube, made of brown wood but painted white on all six sides, was cut into 27 smaller cubes. Once it's cut apart, can you tell us how many smaller cubes were white on 3 sides, on 2 sides, on 1 side, and finally, on no sides?



Answer: 8 were painted on 3 sides; 12 were painted on 2 sides; 6 were painted on 1 side; and 1 had no sides painted at all.

A WORD BRIDGE!

The bridge above contains 10 supporting words. We give you the first letter of each word, plus plenty of hints.

1. Someone who is ineffective.
2. Nervous or irritable.
3. To go and bring something back.
4. To draw your breath in sharply.
5. Keenly aware of the latest trends.
6. A mischievous child.
7. A small, durable vehicle.
8. A small musical instrument.
9. A type of sandy soil.
10. To keep silent.

Answers: 1. Dud. 2. Edgy. 3. Fetch. 4. Gasp. 5. Hip. 6. Imp. 7. Jeep. 8. Kazoo. 9. Loam. 10. Mum.

WORDS FOR YOUR "DATABASE"! Below are two puzzle grids for you to fill in. Hints are given for each word. The words in Grid B contain the same letters as the corresponding words in Grid A.

1. Faded and dull.
2. Golfers need them.
3. To satisfy fully.
4. Flat-top elevation.

Grid A

D			
	A		
		T	
			A

Grid B

B			
	A		
		S	
			E

1. Thin wire nail.
2. Talks too much.
3. Region of the U.S.A.
4. Identical in every way.

Answers: 1. Drab-brad. 2. Bags-gabs. 3. Sate-east. 4. Mass-satin.

Is new kitten's behavior normal?

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: We recently adopted a 6-month-old kitten from the local shelter. "Buster" behaves very well around the kids and me, and he's playful and loves climbing into my lap. But when company comes over, he runs and hides. Is this normal?—Sarah G., via e-mail

DEAR SARAH: This is very common behavior from cats, particularly those that have recently experienced a stressful situation such as being placed in a shelter. But even cats that haven't been exposed to a lot of stress can do this when unfamiliar people visit.

Buster appears to have adapted well to his new home and is comfortable with you and the children, which is great. He's happy and healthy. But it may take him longer to adjust to strange new people in the house.

During the holiday season, make things easier for Buster by placing his food and water, his litter box and his favorite toys and blanket away from heavily trafficked areas of the house. A quiet room that he can access easily is ideal. If you want to introduce him to friends, go and pick him up and cradle him in your arms so that he feels safe, and bring him to your friends so they can pet him briefly and say hello. Then, let him go. He will probably run away again, which is fine.

Unless Buster is acting very strangely—hissing at familiar people, hiding for hours or not eating—I would not worry too much about his behavior. He may never be friendly to everyone who walks in the door, but over time he may adjust more quickly to new faces and unfamiliar scents and make an appearance.

■ ■ ■

Send your tips, questions and comments to Paw's Corner, c/o King Features Weekly Service, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475, or e-mail them to pawscorner@hotmail.com.

(c) 2009 King Features Synd., Inc.

Strange BUT TRUE

By Samantha Weaver

■ It was French author, philosopher and journalist Albert Camus who made the following sage observation: "Nobody realizes that some people expend tremendous energy merely to be normal."

■ According to records kept by the Social Security Administration, the name "Barack" was ranked 2,409th in 2008, up more than 10,000 spots from 12,535th in 2007.

■ Large cities often use high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes in order to encourage carpooling and help reduce traffic congestion. As soon as the lanes appear, however, people start getting creative about ways to get around the restriction. Pregnant women have claimed to be carrying an extra passenger even when all the other seats are empty, and more than one person has placed a mannequin or inflatable doll in the front seat in an effort to fool authorities. Recently, an undertaker in Los Angeles went to court to appeal a judgment against him, claiming that the body in a coffin in the back should count as a passenger.

■ Are you a hypergelast? If you are, it's nothing to be ashamed of; in fact, it might mean you're the life of the party. A hypergelast is someone who laughs a lot.

■ Moore's Law is not good news to those of us who might be a bit technologically challenged; it states that computer technology doubles in complexity every 18 to 24 months.

■ Those who study such things claim that, when it comes to accidents involving household appliances, you're more likely to be injured by a washing machine, but if you are injured by a clothes dryer, it's more likely to be fatal.

■ ■ ■

Thought for the Day: "Happiness is an imaginary condition, formerly attributed by the living to the dead, now usually attributed by adults to children, and by children to adults."—Thomas Szasz

(c) 2009 King Features Synd., Inc.

MAGIC MAZE

WORDS THAT APPEAR WHEN VIEWED IN A MIRROR

P S Y P L I E B Y V R O T L I
F C Z A W T Q N K I F O C Z W
U R P M W J M H E C Y W Z X U
Y S Q N O I A L J O I G E C Z
X U V T O R X P T T Y N L J H
E C M A H Y I A H H W V T R W
P N L M A M M O T H A K I H I
G E C B Y O U O Z H X W A M T
W U S R T T M P A O M M A L T
J I G U E I D M B A M I Y I Y
X W A U T O O T H Y M T S Q I

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions - forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.

ATOYOT
HTOMMAM
IIAWAH
IMAIM
MUMIXAM
OOHAY
OTAMOT
TAMOTUA
TUOHTIW
YAWIXAT
YHTOMIT
YHTOOT
YMMAHW
YMMUY
YTTIW

GO FIGURE! by Linda Thistle

The idea of Go Figure is to arrive at the figures given at the bottom and right-hand columns of the diagram by following the arithmetic signs in the order they are given (that is, from left to right and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers only once.

DIFFICULTY: ★★

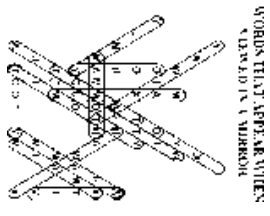
★ Moderate ★★ Difficult
★★★ GO FIGURE!

	x		+		20
+		−		÷	
	x		−		29
÷		x		x	
	+		+		13
10		15		14	

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 7 8

© 2009 King Features Syndicate, Inc.

MAGIC MAZE ANSWER



GO FIGURE ANSWER

13	7	+	5	+	1
	x		x		÷
29	3	−	4	x	8
	÷		−		+
20	6	+	7	x	2

Decorate ornaments with friends

Deck the halls and trim your Christmas tree with colorful, easy to assemble and design shiny ornaments. Choose a craft to fit the abilities of each child so that your whole family can share in the festive spirit of holiday preparation.

You also might use this holiday season as an excuse to invite friends over for an evening of ornament-making. Creating decorations calls forth the imagination, and if we make them with friends of all ages, a happy, artistic collaboration takes place. Best of all, the messiness and the laughter glues together more than ornaments. Memories are made, friendship bonds are strengthened, and the special event might become a new tradition.

Here are some quick and easy ornament-making ideas:

PERSONALIZED BALL ORNAMENT

Express your creativity by decorating purchased or previous years' plain ball ornaments using nontoxic permanent markers or glitter paint in squeeze bottles. If you print names on the ornaments, they can double as a place card at your holiday dinner table and as a Christmas 2008 gift memento.

MARBLED BALL ORNAMENT

Remove the metal cap from the top of a clear round ornament. Add a couple of drops of water inside the ornament, then a couple of drops of acrylic paint. Gently swirl it around. Add a second color if you wish, and repeat for a marbled effect. Replace the metal cap when paint is dry.

SNOWMAN ORNAMENT

Use a glue gun to attach a small clear ball ornament to the top of a larger one to form the head and body. Use a paintbrush to add a few brushstrokes of white glitter paint. Let dry. Use a marker or paint to create eyes and mouth. Glue a small orange felt cutout for a carrot nose. Dress him with a knit or soft fabric scarf where the two balls are glued together. Glue in place, then add a little hat. Find two twigs outdoors and glue onto the large ball for arms.

"The grandkids are coming!" tip: Start a new tradition and give your grandchild a purchased or homemade ornament each year. The growing collection from you will be treasured in years to come.

■ ■ ■

Donna Erickson's award-winning television series "Donna's Day" airs on public television nationwide. Visit www.donnasday.com to find out when it airs on your local PBS station and to sign up for Donna's e-newsletter.

(c) 2009 Donna Erickson
Distributed by King Features Synd.

Life & Style

Cameron's 'Avatar' premieres in London to cheers

AP

In this film publicity image released by 20th Century Fox, the character Neytiri, voiced by Zoe Saldana, and the character Jake, voiced by Sam Worthington are shown in a scene from, "Avatar."

LONDON (AP)—A delighted audience clapped and cheered as the lights came on after the world premiere of James Cameron's sci-fi extravaganza "Avatar" in London on Thursday.

The 3-D epic about humans taking extraterrestrial form as they explore a distant world is reportedly one of the most expensive movies ever made, with a price tag well in excess of the $200 million spent to make "Titanic."

The industry has been watching closely to see how audiences respond to Cameron's long-awaited film, which uses cutting-edge digital technology to create dizzying special effects. On Thursday, the film provoked a breathless response from many in the audience.

"It's brilliant, it's as good as the hype, both the 3-D effects and the story," said 28-year-old Victoria Blasdale.

"This was remarkable, Unlike anything I've ever seen before," added law maker John Whittingdale, who had joined the media, Cameron fans and families at the premiere.

Stars Sigourney Weaver and Zoe Saldana joined the crowds on a specially made blue carpet at London's Leicester Square before the gala screening at two massive side-by-side movie theaters.

Cameron said the movie, set in the future on an alien planet being pillaged by humans for natural resources, deals with how indigenous people are treated by newcomers.

"It's a way of connecting a thread through history. I take that thread further back to the 16th and 17th centuries and to how the Europeans pretty much took over South and Central America and displaced and marginalized the indigenous peoples there," he said.

"There's just this long, wonderful history of the human race written in blood going back as far as we can remember, where we have this tendency to just take what we want without asking," he said.

Weaver said she didn't consider the film a sci-fi movie. "I consider it an old-fashioned, epic swashbuckling romance," she said.

There's a topical environmental message too. As humans exploit their newfound world the indigenous species of the planet harmonize with nature to fight back.

"There's a sense of entitlement—we're here, we're big, we've got the guns, we've got the technology, we've got the brains, we therefore are entitled to every damn thing on this planet," said Cameron, describing the attitude of humans in the movie.

"That's not how it works and we're going to find out the hard way if we don't wise up and start seeking a life that's in balance with the natural cycles of life on earth."

Cameron conceived the story for "Avatar" in 1995 then waited a decade for technology to catch up so he could film it. The film mixes live action and computer animation to create an eye-poppingly vivid alien world.

"Avatar" is Cameron's first narrative film since 1997's "Titanic," which won 11 Academy Awards and has taken $1.8 billion worldwide at the box office.

"Avatar" opens around the world next week.

TV special on surprise pop star Susan Boyle debuts

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Susan Boyle sings, and Simon Cowell and other celebrities sing her praises in a weekend TV special about the Cinderella story that has made her a best-selling recording artist.

All that's lacking is a prince, but she says romance has to wait.

"Och, there's no time for that now. I'm far too busy," Boyle said. "There was a TV company that wanted to set me up with a man. Apparently he was a nice man, but I've got my living to do now. I don't mind being friendly, but no marriage plans as yet."

"I Dreamed a Dream: The Susan Boyle Story," debuting at 8 p.m. EST Sunday on TV Guide Network, details her sudden burst of fame and includes performances by Boyle from her new CD and with Broadway star Elaine Paige, the London West End cast of "Les Miserables" and others.

The hourlong show also airs Sunday on ITV1 in Britain.

Boyle, 48, stole the spotlight on "Britain's Got Talent" last spring, although she lost out on winning the contest. She has had an at-times bumpy ride, including a brief hospitalization for exhaustion after the show's season finale.

But her "I Dreamed a Dream" CD debuted last week at No. 1 and her record label, Columbia Records, said that gave her the best first week sales of 2009 and the best-selling album debut by a woman in the Billboard SoundScan era.

AP

In this undated image released by TV Guide Network, Susan Boyle sings "I Dreamed A Dream" with the London West End cast of "Les Miserables," in a performance that will be featured in "I Dreamed A Dream: The Susan Boyle Story," airing Sunday, Dec. 13, 2009, at 8:00 p.m. EST on the TV Guide Network.

In comments released by TV Guide Network and in an e-mail exchange with The Associated Press, Boyle said she's delighting in her unlikely journey from a quiet Scottish villager to a star, but remains unaltered.

"No, I am still the same person I always was—the wee lady from Blackburn. I still live in the same house, I still like the same things," Boyle said. "I have never wanted to change, I have only ever wanted to be a professional singer, and perhaps that's the only way in which I think differently of myself now: I feel like a professional."

Her image has certainly changed, with Boyle downright glamorous as she performs in the TV special. It's different from her original look that was routinely characterized as "dowdy." (She admits to "mad hair" and "bushy eyebrows.")

"Well, it wasn't very nice," Boyle said of the description. "But then I had never really thought about how I looked until I saw myself on television. I think I scrub up quite well now!"

Boyle sings "Cry Me a River" and the Rolling Stones tune "Wild Horses" in the TV special that includes interviews with her as well as Cowell, the "American Idol" judge who is executive producer of "Britain's Got Talent," Donny Osmond and others.

Her dreams now don't include a success-fueled shopping spree, Boyle said, but she is thinking of helping others.

Attorneys ask court to dismiss Polanski sex case

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Lawyers for Roman Polanski and his victim in a 32-year-old case joined forces Thursday to ask an appeals court to dismiss a sexual misconduct charge against the director in the interest of justice.

It was a surprise move in a lively hearing where appellate justices peppered lawyers and a prosecutor with pointed questions, often interrupting their arguments to raise new issues.

Associate Justice Laurie Zelon asked the prosecutor why the district attorney's office had not investigated recent allegations of misconduct by a judge and prosecutor during Polanski's 1977 court proceedings.

"Doesn't the district attorney's office have an interest in finding out what happened here?" Zelon asked.

Deputy District Attorney Phyllis Asayama replied, "Yes, we are interested. But I'm not sure we have the proper agency to do this." She didn't elaborate.

Presiding Justice Dennis Perluss, acknowledging there was misconduct by the now deceased judge, also questioned Asayama about whether "the district attorney has an obligation to see that justice is served."

The California Second District Court of Appeal is being asked to decide if it should order a Superior Court judge to consider dismissing the case without Polanski's attendance in court. The justices did not immediately issue a ruling.

"He has to be here," Asayama said, "especially given he had options 30 years ago and he didn't use them."

Polanski, the director of such classic films as "Chinatown" and "Rosemary's Baby," has been a wanted man since he fled to France on the eve of sentencing in 1978 for having unlawful sexual intercourse with a 13-year-old girl.

ABC appoints Stephanopoulos to be 'GMA' host

NEW YORK (AP)—ABC's selection of George Stephanopoulos to replace Diane Sawyer on "Good Morning America" signals a desire by the network to toughen up the morning show during tough times.

The appointment of Stephanopoulos, the network's chief Washington and political correspondent, was announced Thursday. He'll begin on the second-place morning show on Monday, paired with current co-anchor Robin Roberts. Sawyer is becoming the "World News" anchor as Charles Gibson retires.

Even before the need for a new host came up, "Good Morning America" had been seeking to shift its pendulum more toward harder news, particularly in the show's first 45 minutes, and add reports on health, consumer and legal issues, said David Westin, ABC News president. It reflects the nation's serious mood during a time of high unemployment and two wars, he said.

"George offered me somebody who could absolutely execute that revised plan for `GMA' and also be a representative to the world, to our viewers, that we're altering the direction of our program," Westin said.

Westin said he considered, and gave screen tests to, several candidates both inside and outside ABC News. Stephanopoulos and Chris Cuomo, the show's current newsreader, both took turns as guest hosts this fall.

Cuomo is leaving "Good Morning America" to become co-host of ABC's prime-time "20/20" newsmagazine with Elizabeth Vargas, the network said. Juju Chang will replace him as newsreader.

"GMA" is an important profit center for the network, even as it runs behind NBC's "Today" show in the ratings. "Today" marked 14 years of winning each week in the ratings last week, and its victory margin of 1.5 million viewers was its largest in more than three years, according to the Nielsen Co.

Westin has long been a booster of Stephanopoulos. Twelve years ago, shortly after Westin became ABC News president, he suggested that the former Clinton administration White House aide consider a journalism career. Stephanopoulos was then a member of Sunday morning's "This Week" political roundtable.

Billboard names Taylor, Kanye among year's best

NEW YORK (AP)—They gave us the most memorable music moment of 2009, so it's only fitting that Kanye West and Taylor Swift have been named the king and queen of the charts.

Billboard magazine named Swift the top female artist, while West was declared top male artist. But Swift trumps West overall. She was the top artist of the year, with Beyonce coming in second and Lady Gaga third.

Swift has a sophomore CD, "Fearless," that has sold more than 4.5 million copies.

West and Swift provided one of the most talked-about episodes of the year when West hijacked her MTV Video Music Awards acceptance speech.

Billboard runs its full list of the year's chart-toppers on Friday, as well as the decade's.

Singer Taylor Swift attends the launch party for Vevo, a premium music video and entertainment experience, created by Universal Music Group, Sony Music Entertainment and YouTube, in New York, on Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2009. AP

B'way's 'Memphis' gets an original cast recording

NEW YORK (AP)—The bluesy, rock 'n' roll sounds of "Memphis" have found their way to a recording studio.

The Broadway musical's original cast recording has been made by Delray Records, producer Sue Frost said Thursday, and details on its national release will be available shortly.

For those who can't wait, the recording will be sold exclusively—starting Friday—at the Shubert Theatre where the musical opened in October. "Memphis" tells the story of a street-smart white disc jockey who brings black music to mainstream, white audiences in the 1950s.

It features music by Bon Jovi keyboard player David Bryan who also co-wrote the lyrics with the show's book writer Joe DiPietro. "Memphis" stars Chad Kimball as the white DJ and Montego Glover as a black club singer with whom he falls in love.

The recording was made last month and will include a bonus track of "Memphis Lives in Me," sung by Bryan.

In other cast-recording news, Nonesuch Records and PS Classics are in talks to jointly record the Broadway revival of Stephen Sondheim's "A Little Night Music," starring Catherine Zeta-Jones and Angela Lansbury, within a few weeks of its Dec. 13 opening.

Judge: Jon Gosselin must stop unofficial events

ROCKVILLE, Md. (AP)—A Maryland judge is ruling in the dispute between Jon Gosselin and the TLC network that the father must stop making media appearances that are at odds with his contract.

Montgomery County Circuit Judge Michael D. Mason ruled Thursday following a one-day hearing.

TLC Chief Operating Officer Edward Sabin testified that Gosselin made unauthorized appearances and endorsements. In particular, he mentioned a pool party that Gosselin hosted at the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas. Sabin says photos from the event were at odds with the wholesome image of the show, "Jon & Kate Plus 8."

Gosselin did not appear in court, and his lawyers did not present any evidence.

The judge granted a preliminary injunction. A trial is scheduled for April 19.

AP

In this Oct. 26, 2009 file photo, Jon Gosselin leaves the Montgomery County courthouse in Norristown, Pa.

ENTERTAINMENT TIDBITS

Slater says changes coming on 'The Forgotten'

HATTIESBURG, Miss. (AP)—Actor Christian Slater says some changes are in store in upcoming episodes of his ABC drama "The Forgotten." Slater stars in the show about amateur detectives who investigate the deaths of John and Jane Doe victims. He said ABC has signed off on a few more episodes despite the show's lackluster ratings. One of the changes is new cast member Elisha Cuthbert, whose film credits include "The Girl Next Door." Slater says Cuthbert brings a new energy to the set. The actor's comments came Thursday during a taping of "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition." Slater is helping volunteers renovate the home of Sherman and Gina Heathcock of Hattiesburg, Miss. He said the episode will air in 2010.

LA man pleads not guilty to stealing from Catwoman

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A Los Angeles man pleaded not guilty Thursday to stealing $25,000 in jewelry from actress Julie Newmar, who portrayed the first Catwoman on the 1960s "Batman" TV series, Newmar, 76, spotted the pilfered jewelry for sale on eBay and alerted authorities. Robert Ouriel, 48, pleaded not guilty to grand theft Thursday, one day after Los Angeles prosecutors charged him. Ouriel's attorney, Jeff Rubenstein, said he expects his client will be vindicated. "Mr. Ouriel wants to clear his name quickly and I believe this case will be resolved to everyone's satisfaction very soon," Rubenstein said. Ouriel was arrested last month and remains free on $50,000 bail. Prosecutors say he was an acquaintance of Newmar's and allegedly sent the items to an Illinois pawn shop that listed them for sale online.

'Sondheim on Sondheim' gets more cast members

NEW YORK (AP)—The cast of the Broadway-bound "Sondheim on Sondheim" has grown. Tom Wopat will join co-stars Barbara Cook and Vanessa Williams in the Roundabout Theatre Company production, which takes a look at the composer through his music and through film and videotape interviews with him. Roundabout artistic director Todd Haimes says the cast will also include Leslie Kritzer, Norm Lewis, Euan Morton and Matthew Scott. "Sondheim on Sondheim," directed by James Lapine, opens April 22 at Studio 54. Previews begin March 19. It will be the second Sondheim musical on Broadway this season. A revival of "A Little Night Music" opens Sunday. Wopat has numerous stage credits and two Tony nominations, but may best be known for playing Luke Duke in the TV series "The Dukes of Hazzard" three decades ago.

Galatoire's in New Orleans sells majority interest

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—New Orleans landmark Galatoire's Restaurant is no longer solely owned by the founder's family. The restaurant, which serves fine Creole cuisine in the city's French Quarter, announced Wednesday that majority ownership had been sold to businessmen Todd Trosclair and John Georges who have no previous restaurant ties. Galatoire's, founded in 1905, had been owned and operated by a board made up of 32 descendants of founder Jean Galatoire. Five family members retain minority ownership. One of the oldest restaurants in America, Galatoire's was named the country's outstanding restaurant by the James Beard Foundation in 2004.

Affleck, Stewart films taking Sundance road trip

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The Sundance Film Festival will take to the road with films featuring Ben Affleck, Kristen Stewart, Kevin Kline and other stars screening around the country. Robert Redford's independent-cinema showcase will show eight films in eight different cities on Jan. 28, the movies chosen from the lineup playing during the Utah festival that runs Jan. 21-31. The downsizing drama "The Company Men," featuring Affleck, Kevin Costner and Tommy Lee Jones will screen in Brookline, Mass. Stewart's Joan Jett music tale "The Runaways" will play in Madison, Wis. And Kline's gigolo story "The Extra Man" will run in Nashville, Tenn. Other films will play in Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Brooklyn, N.Y., and Ann Arbor, Mich.

Thomas Hoving, ex-director of NYC Met Museum, dies

NEW YORK (AP)—Former Metropolitan Art Museum director Thomas Hoving has died at his home in New York City. Nancy Hoving says her husband died Thursday of cancer. He was 78. He was director of the museum from 1967 to 1977 and was known for championing blockbuster exhibits. Artifacts from King Tut's tomb were the most popular exhibit in the museum's history. They drew 8 million visitors.

Daughter is crushed by loss of her birth mom's letters

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: I am nearly 50, and learned when I was in my early 30s that I was adopted. I became engaged to a man my adoptive mother did not like. When I told her the news, her response was, "Do what you want—you aren't ours anyway!" I was devastated. I didn't realize it was literally true until years later, when several of my cousins confirmed it.

Since then, I have located my birth family, although my birth mother died long ago. I asked my adoptive mother (who was and still is "Mom" to me) to please send me all the documents she had relating to the adoption, as well as some letters she mentioned that my birth mother had sent in later years saying she was thinking about me and hoping I was well. Mom told me she had thrown them all out! I was devastated all over again.

Mom says I'm overly sensitive, that the papers were worthless trash and were hers to dispose of. Over the years she had promised several times to show them to me but never did. Now she claims I knew all along that I was adopted and just wanted to find a better mom.

Abby, am I being ridiculous? I still have a hole in my heart because I'll never speak to my birth mom, although my siblings have filled in a lot for me. I was able to get my birth certificate and some other papers, but would have loved to have read the letters my birth mom wrote asking about me. I haven't spoken to Mom since, and I'm waiting on your verdict now.

JANET IN TEXAS

DEAR JANET: Your feelings are not "ridiculous." It was cruel of your adoptive mother to promise to share your birth mother's letters with you and then to destroy them. She may have done it because she was deeply insecure about whether she would measure up in your eyes if you saw them. Her comment at the time of your engagement was also cruel in light of the fact that you had no clue that you were adopted when she said it.

Was this woman EVER a loving and supportive parent? If so, then try to forgive her. But from my perspective, "Mom" has some glaring personality flaws, and whether you speak to her is strictly up to you.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: Please settle a disagreement I'm having with my boyfriend. In the song "Jingle Bells," he insists the horse's name is "Bob Tail." However, I'm pretty sure it's a description of the horse, as their tails used to be "bobbed," or cut short.

Please understand my boyfriend is one of those guys who is "never wrong"!

JINGLE BELLE IN DALY CITY, CALIF.

DEAR JINGLE BELLE: Never wrong? Well, there's always a first time. You happen to be 100 percent right. The lyric in the carol isn't "Bob Tail," it's "bobtail." The definition of the word is in Webster's Collegiate Dictionary. (What may need some "bobbing" may be your boyfriend's ego, and I hope you had some money "riding" on this.)

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: Is it impolite to ask for your favorite server at a restaurant you frequent?

DINING OUT IN WINCHESTER, VA.

DEAR DINING OUT: No, it's not impolite—in fact, it's done all the time. But if the server is popular, it's always a good idea to call ahead to reserve a table in your favorite server's section.

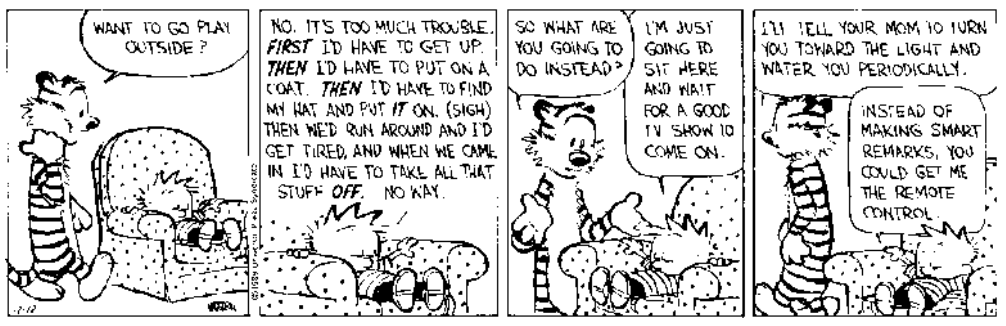
Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Good advice for everyone—teens to seniors—is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby—Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


WANT TO GO PLAY OUTSIDE?
NO. IT'S TOO MUCH TROUBLE. FIRST I'D HAVE TO GET UP. THEN I'D HAVE TO PUT ON A COAT. THEN I'D HAVE TO FIND MY HAT AND PUT IT ON. (SIGH) THEN WE'D RUN AROUND AND I'D GET TIRED, AND WHEN WE CAME IN I'D HAVE TO TAKE ALL THAT STUFF OFF. NO WAY.
SO WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO INSTEAD?
I'M JUST GOING TO SIT HERE AND WAIT FOR A GOOD TV SHOW TO COME ON.
I'LL TELL YOUR MOM TO TURN YOU TOWARD THE LIGHT AND WATER YOU PERIODICALLY.
INSTEAD OF MAKING SMART REMARKS, YOU COULD GET ME THE REMOTE CONTROL.

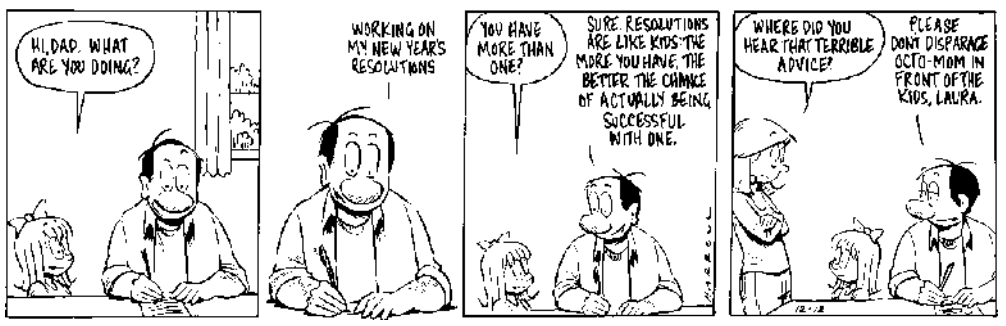
Garfield®

By Jim Davis

LIZ, I'M STUCK ON YOUR GIFT. I NEED A HINT
OH, JON, YOU DON'T HAVE TO GET ME ANYTHING
JIM DAVIS 12-12
SHE'S REALLY NOT PLAYING FAIR
LOVE IS SUCH A FUN SPECTATOR SPORT

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


HI, DAD. WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
WORKING ON MY NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS
YOU HAVE MORE THAN ONE?
SURE. RESOLUTIONS ARE LIKE KIDS: THE MORE YOU HAVE, THE BETTER THE CHANCE OF ACTUALLY BEING SUCCESSFUL WITH ONE.
WHERE DID YOU HEAR THAT TERRIBLE ADVICE?
PLEASE DON'T DISPARAGE OCTO-MOM IN FRONT OF THE KIDS, LAURA.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

HOW'S IT GOING, ELVIN?
NOT GREAT.
LAST NIGHT I WENT TO BED WITH MY CHRISTMAS LIGHTS ON
THIS MORNING I HAD TO HAVE TRIPLE A COME OUT AND JUMP-START MY HOUSE.

CROSSWORD

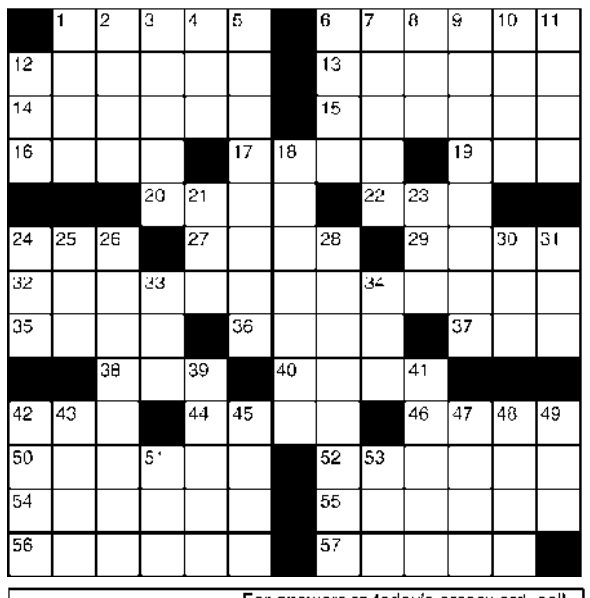
By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Exact moment
6 Ducks
12 Sweatshirt type
13 Strip
14 Against difficulties
15 Starbucks size
16 Mexican money
17 Rams fans?
19 Dancer Charisse
20 Partner
22 Keatsian piece
24 — de deux
27 Siamese
29 On the rocks
32 Rare
35 Lowly laborer
36 Corner
37 Opposite of "post-"
38 Kvetch
40 Took to the skies
42 Copper head?
44 Oldies player
46 Status in a hierarchy
50 Press hard, as brakes
52 Fan, and then some
54 Majestic
55 Show hosts
56 "Allakazam!"
57 Fists, slangily

DOWN
1 Vatican VIP
2 Ahs' partners
3 Figure of speech
4 Goose egg
5 Fund-raising show
6 Advantage
7 Left-hand page
8 Ortiz of "Ugly Betty"
9 Mortarboard's opposite?
10 Vortex
11 Start a garden
12 Cadence-call syllable
18 Gradually disappear
21 standstill
23 Noise
24 Vim and vigor
25 Chopper
26 Old time?
28 Put on a pedestal
30 Screw up
31 Coloring agent
33 Geneticist's abbr.
34 Mamie's hubby
39 Common Halloween costume
41 Destruction
42 Now, initially
43 Vision problem
45 Grooving on
47 Sheltered
48 Yeses' undoers
49 Gold units (Abbr.)
51 Greek consonants
53 Flightless bird

Solution time: 27 mins.

Yesterday's answer 12-12



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Mayim Bialik, 34; Madchen Amick, 39; Jennifer Connelly, 39; Tracy Austin, 47

Happy Birthday: The emphasis must be put on dedication, loyalty and discipline this year. You can make a difference to something you believe in if you are willing to lower your overhead and stabilize your financial future. Love is in the stars and will be one of your motivators this year for the path you follow and the agreements and contracts you are willing to sign. Your numbers are 6, 13, 20, 22, 29, 38, 45

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): You'll be surprised how much you can accomplish if you speak directly from the heart. Discipline and hard work will pay off later in the month when you need a little time to yourself. A romantic moment will be enlightening. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Talks and negotiations will enable you to make plans for the future. Get everything you want in writing or you may be short-changed. A change in plans can be to your advantage if you are adaptable. Emotional matters can be resolved if you reveal your true feelings. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): You may be required to pay off an old debt. You can ask for financial assistance but, before accepting, go over the terms and decide if it is better to wait until the new year because of taxes. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Your status may be altered by the changes going on at work or within your community. Get involved so that you have a say. Expressing your concerns will allow you to raise awareness and your expertise and research will lead to an unexpected advancement. ✪✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): You'll be impulsive when it comes to shopping and entertainment costs. Don't be fooled by products that promise the impossible. Hold off making a move, decision or promise until you fully understand what's involved. ✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Discuss your plans with someone you respect and you will get an inside view that could potentially change your mind and your direction regarding home and family. A relationship you thought was secure may need special attention. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Coming up with alternative suggestions will help you stay within your budget and please everyone around you. A bargain can be found if you look in the right place. Do your homework and you will succeed. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Stick to what you know and do best. Appeal to the emotional side of any issue that concerns family members. Expect someone to take action at home without consulting you. Anger will not be the answer. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Make travel plans or connect with someone from your past who has expertise or knowledge you need to tap into. Expect someone to make last-minute changes that will upset your plans. Regroup quickly and proceed. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

COPYRIGHT 2007 UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): You have to share your thoughts before you make a move. Withholding information will slow you down. You'll be surprised how quickly your decisions affect others. There is money to be made if you jump at an opportunity. ✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): What you have to offer will be welcomed and, in return, you should get the backing you need to proceed. Love is in the stars and will be a contributing factor to the proposal you want to make. ✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Look at your options and you will see what needs to be done to prepare for a better future. A deal can be negotiated to your liking. A little friendly persuasion will make the difference you need to move forward with your plans. ✪✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You have a strong sense of justice and fair play. You are dedicated and determined. You are passionate, aggressive and insightful.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations,* ***myspace.com/eugenialast*** *for Eugenia's blog,* ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

			4	8				6
7								
1	5			9				
5		8					9	
	9						4	
	4					1		2
				7			3	1
								8
6				5	2			

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 12/12

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

8	3	4	1	2	9	7	5	6
9	7	6	4	5	3	2	8	1
5	1	2	8	6	7	9	4	3
4	2	9	7	1	8	3	6	5
1	6	3	5	4	2	8	7	9
7	5	8	3	9	6	4	1	2
6	8	7	2	3	1	5	9	4
3	4	1	9	7	5	6	2	8
2	9	5	6	8	4	1	3	7

Difficulty Level ★★★★

©2009 Conceptis Puzzles, Dist. by King Features Syndicate, Inc.

WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

GIRL PARTIES Solution: 8 letters

S	S	E	T	S	O	H	R	E	B	M	U	L	S	C
E	N	G	A	P	M	A	H	C	A	R	E	A	A	G
T	T	I	A	R	T	R	O	P	P	R	T	N	L	N
T	G	A	N	C	R	W	Y	S	I	I	D	I	O	I
E	A	E	L	O	A	I	E	A	N	Y	M	I	N	L
R	R	I	I	O	I	K	H	E	W	O	I	H	Z	L
O	D	I	I	I	C	I	E	I	K	A	N	O	I	E
L	E	E	U	R	O	O	A	Z	S	E	T	M	I	T
E	N	G	T	C	E	G	H	R	I	H	N	E	L	Y
H	A	A	U	H	I	W	E	C	O	N	O	D	G	R
C	I	T	F	F	F	V	O	T	O	C	A	F	S	O
A	P	S	T	S	N	M	E	H	H	F	E	G	S	T
B	R	E	V	O	P	E	E	L	S	E	F	D	R	S
D	A	N	C	E	N	T	H	G	I	N	R	E	V	O
N	E	M	O	W	O	B	A	R	R	E	T	T	E	S

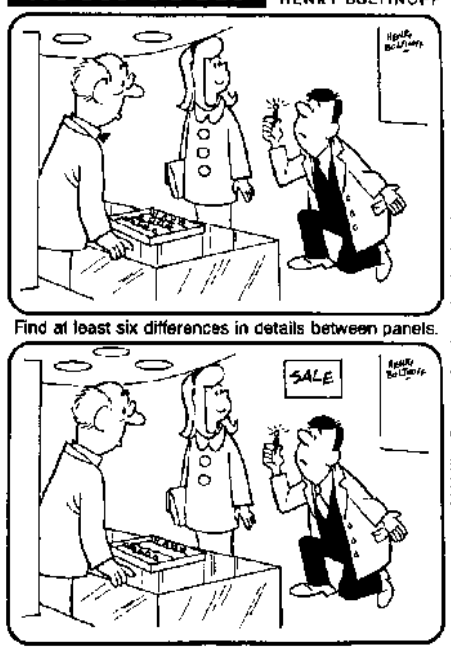
© 2009 Universal Uclick www.wonderword.com 12/12

Bachelorettes, Barrettes, Bow, Cake, Candy, Care, Champagne, Chocolate, Coffee, Conversation, Dance, Decoration, Garden, Getaway, Get-together, Gift, Glitz, Hair, Home, Hostess, Limo, Organize, Overnight, Plan, Portrait, Salon, Satin, Shoes, Shower, Sleepover, Slumber, Stagette, Storytelling, Teas, Teen, Theme, Tutu, Weekend, Women

Yesterday's Answer: Priority

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.

© 2009 King Features Syndicate, Inc. World rights reserved

Differences: 1. Sale sign is added. 2. Button missing from woman's jacket. 3. Ceiling light is added. 4. Bowtie is missing. 5. Man's tie is white. 6. Row of rings is missing.

Wishing Well®

8	5	3	8	2	7	6	5	3	2	3	5	4
Y	D	S	O	K	D	A	E	P	E	R	E	C
5	6	7	3	4	2	6	5	7	8	7	6	5
P	N	O	E	H	E	E	R	C	U	U	W	O
7	4	6	8	3	6	8	3	8	7	3	5	4
M	A	F	G	A	R	A	D	I	E	L	O	R
5	2	3	4	6	8	2	6	4	7	5	2	7
T	P	O	M	I	N	P	E	I	N	E	R	T
4	8	3	2	7	4	6	4	5	2	5	4	5
N	A	V	O	I	G	N	N	D	M	L	E	O
4	3	7	4	8	2	8	2	7	4	7	8	7
W	E	D	F	P	I	P	S	E	R	A	R	S
6	4	8	5	4	8	5	4	8	2	4	2	8
D	I	O	V	E	V	E	N	A	E	D	S	L

HERE IS A PLEASANT LITTLE GAME that will give you a message every day. It's a numerical puzzle designed to spell out your fortune. Count the letters in your first name. If the number of letters is 6 or more, subtract 4. If the number is less than 6, add 3. The result is your key number. Start at the upper left-hand corner and check one of your key numbers, left to right. Then read the message the letters under the checked figures give you.

© 2009 King Features Syndicate, Inc. World rights reserved

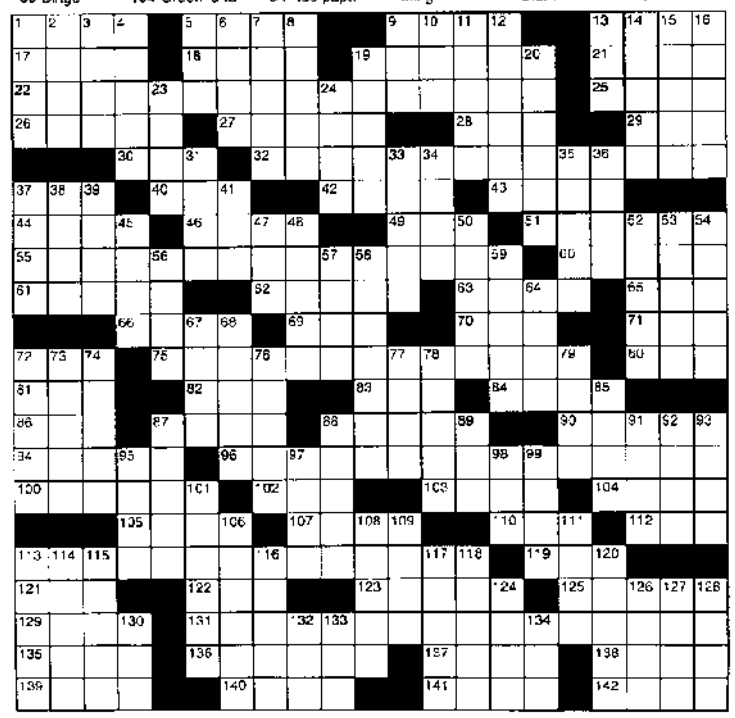
Super Crossword — BIG CHEESES

ACROSS

1 Scrabble piece
5 Colt color
9 Chore
13 Marine leader?
17 "Dosa" tune
18 Woody's boy
19 Synagogue singer
21 Columbo or Tamblyn
22 Cheesy football player?
25 Decree
28 Incorporate, as territory
27 Madame Tussaud
28 English trio?
29 Self-esteem
30 Scientific site
32 Cheesy TV character?
37 — -de-sac
40 Throng
42 Robotic rock group
43 Bit of hardware
44 Perched on
46 Beppu brew
49 Miscalculate
51 Award
55 Cheesy late-night host?
60 Binge
61 Gossamer
62 They just want to have fun
63 Close as can be
65 "— Believer" ('66 hit)
66 TV's "My Two —"
69 Toyshop initials
70 Stocking stuffer?
71 Delace
72 Old Testament book
75 Cheesy clarinetist?
80 Sheridan or Sothern
81 Copy
82 Singer Tex
83 Tallahassee sch.
84 Baal or Elvis
85 Actress Tilly
87 Find fault
88 George Hamilton's ex
90 Chula —, CA
94 A Muse
96 Cheesy televangelist?
100 Swift stuff
102 Where flocks frolic
103 Go it alone
104 Green and
105 Mississippi senator
107 Hellenic letters
110 Had cap
112 Actress Zadora
113 Cheesy basketball player?
119 Massage
121 Tempest — teapot
122 Mineral suffix
123 Throws down the gauntlet
125 Soprano Tetrazzini
129 Brink
131 Cheesy aviator?
135 Is inexact
135 Sporting dog
137 Toast topper
138 "— Came Running" ('58 film)
139 Pub missive
140 Director Nicolas
141 Rec. test
142 Baseball's Speaker

DOWN

1 Raid of "Just Visiting"
2 Nutritional need
3 Pride papa
4 Blackboard support
5 —4 (Toyota model)
6 38 Down city
7 Islamic deity
8 — Dame
9 Kind of cross
10 "— Day Now" ('62 hit)
11 Word with bath or shower
12 Agile Olga
13 Pound sound
14 Peace's partner
15 Custom
16 Mary of "The Maltese Falcon"
19 — de mer tho
20 Just out
23 Final
24 Encircle
31 Cornice kin
33 Maintains
34 Comic Crosby
35 — shark
36 Defeat by a knockout
37 No gentlemen
38 À Four Corners state
39 A many-splendored thing
41 "Pshaw!"
45 The — Piper
47 Beer barrel
48 Uplift
50 Jamaican cultist
52 — ballerina
53 Macho type
54 Long for
56 Olive —
57 Lug
58 With detachment
59 Campbell or Judd
64 Knight's quaff
67 — vu
68 Stallion sound
72 Maestro Levine
73 Wagner work
74 Biblical repetition
76 Katmandu's country
77 Lofty initials?
78 Sahara sights
79 — Scotia
85 Relish
87 French painter
88 Cremona craftsman
89 From — Z
91 Om:
92 Hatcher of "Lois & Clark"
93 Geometry calculation
95 Joust
97 Encounter
98 Landon or Kjellin
99 Johannesburg resident
101 Standards
105 Restrict
106 Rover
108 Furniture wood
109 Railroad dogs.
111 '64 Michael Caine film
113 Brandish
114 Where to eat biryani
115 Light beer
116 Cold-war assn.
117 Certain deck
118 Sam of "Jurassic Park"
120 Pop
124 Hook's right hand?
126 Oistrakh or Stravinsky
127 Word form for "somewhat"
128 Pugnacious Olympian
130 Cornerstone abbr.
132 AAA offering
133 Poultry serving
134 Store



© 2009 King Features Syndicate, Inc.

Trivia test

by Bill Rodriguez

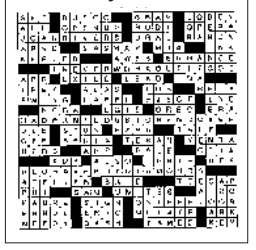
1. MOVIES: What horror actor starred in the 1958 version of "The Fly"?
2. LANGUAGE: "Draw, O Caesar, erase a coward" is an example of what?
3. COMICS: What was the name of Caspar the Friendly Ghost's ghost horse friend?
4. LAW: What did the 21st Amendment to the Constitution do – or rather, undo?
5. TELEVISION: What was the name of the evil group that battled the good guys on "The Man from U.N.C.L.E."
6. CHEMISTRY: What is the symbol for the element gold?
7. INVENTIONS: Who is credited with inventing the bicycle pedal?
8. LITERATURE: Who wrote the autobiographical novel "Empire of the Sun"?
9. ART: For what subject matter was painter John Singer Sargent best known?
10. FAMOUS QUOTATIONS: Who said, "The unexamined life is not worth living"?

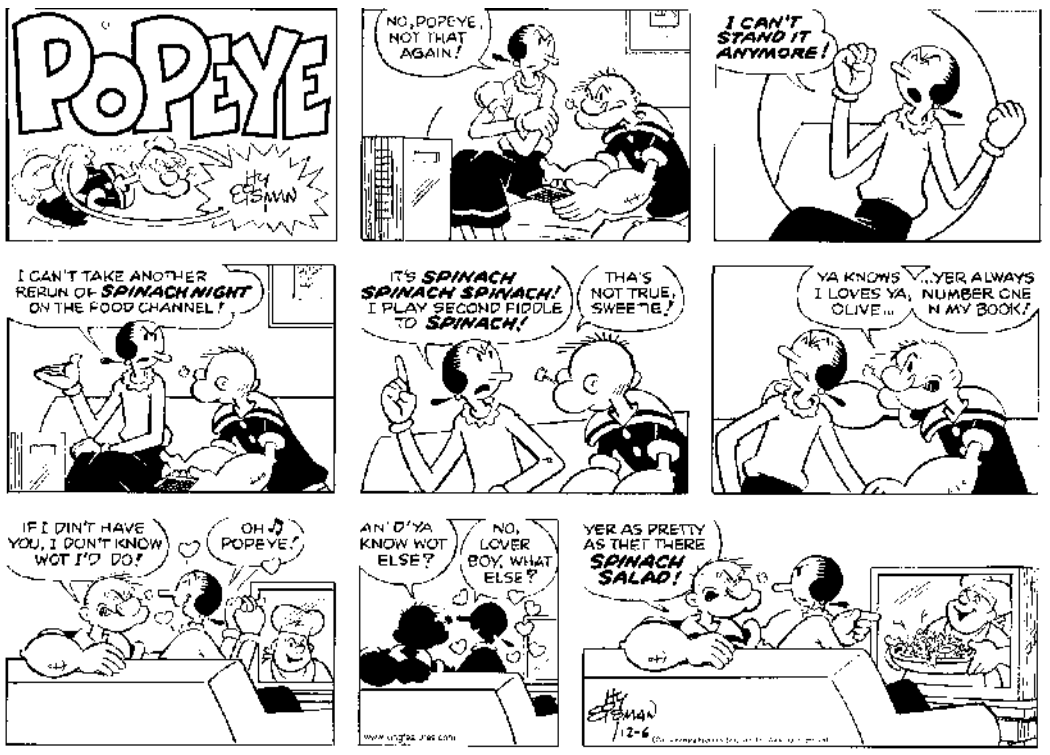
Answers

1. Vincent Price
2. A palindrome (reads the same forward and backward)
3. Nightmare
4. It repealed Prohibition
5. THRUSH
6. Au (from the Latin word "aurum")
7. Pierre and Ernest Michaux
8. J.G. Ballard
9. Portraits
10. Socrates

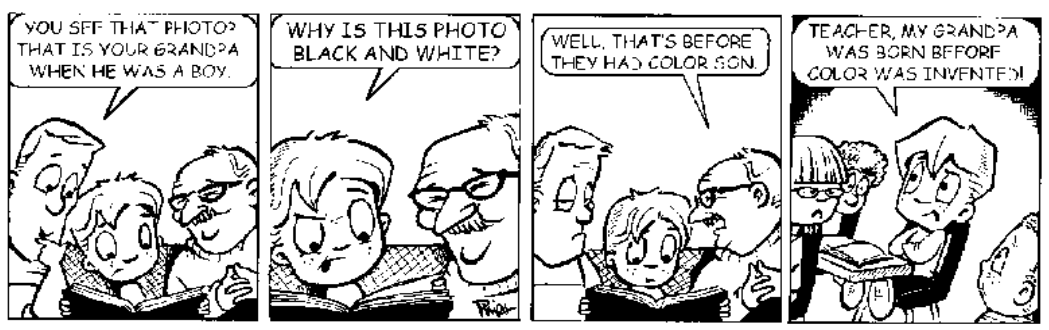
© 2009 King Features Synd., Inc.

Saturday's Answers



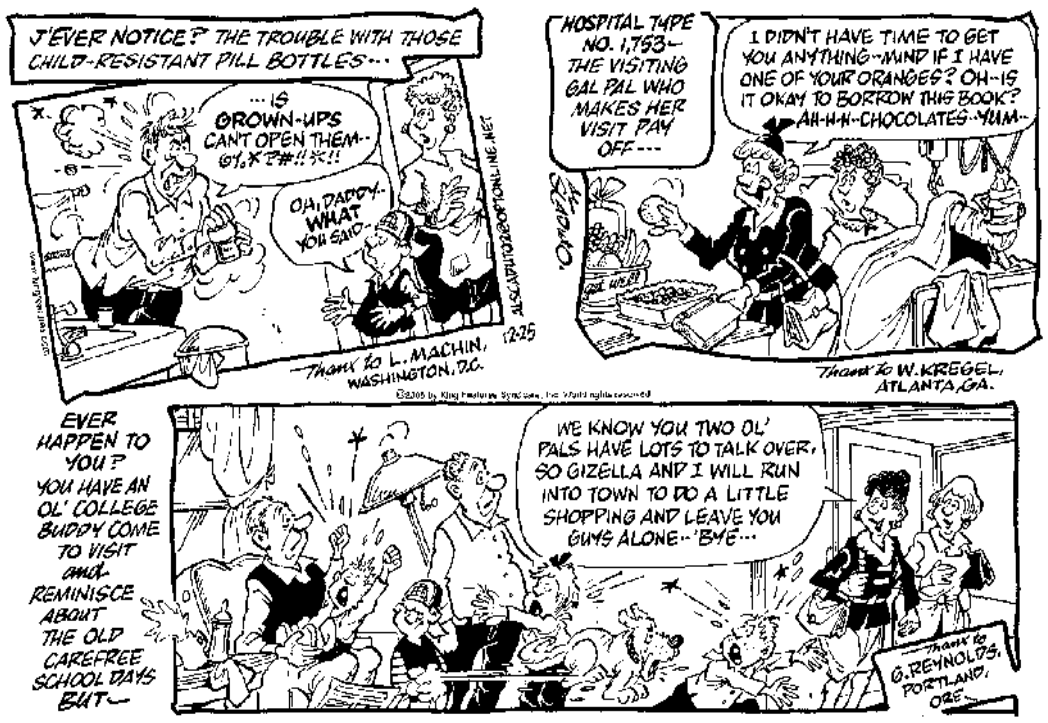

POPEYE
NO, POPEYE, NOT THAT AGAIN!
I CAN'T STAND IT ANYMORE!
I CAN'T TAKE ANOTHER RERUN OF SPINACH NIGHT ON THE FOOD CHANNEL!
IT'S SPINACH SPINACH SPINACH! I PLAY SECOND FIDDLE TO SPINACH!
THAT'S NOT TRUE, SWEETIE!
YA KNOWS I LOVES YA, OLIVE...
...YER ALWAYS NUMBER ONE IN MY BOOK!
IF I DIN'T HAVE YOU, I DON'T KNOW WOT I'D DO!
OH ♫ POPEYE!
AN' D'YA KNOW WOT ELSE?
NO, LOVER BOY, WHAT ELSE?
YER AS PRETTY AS THET THERE SPINACH SALAD!

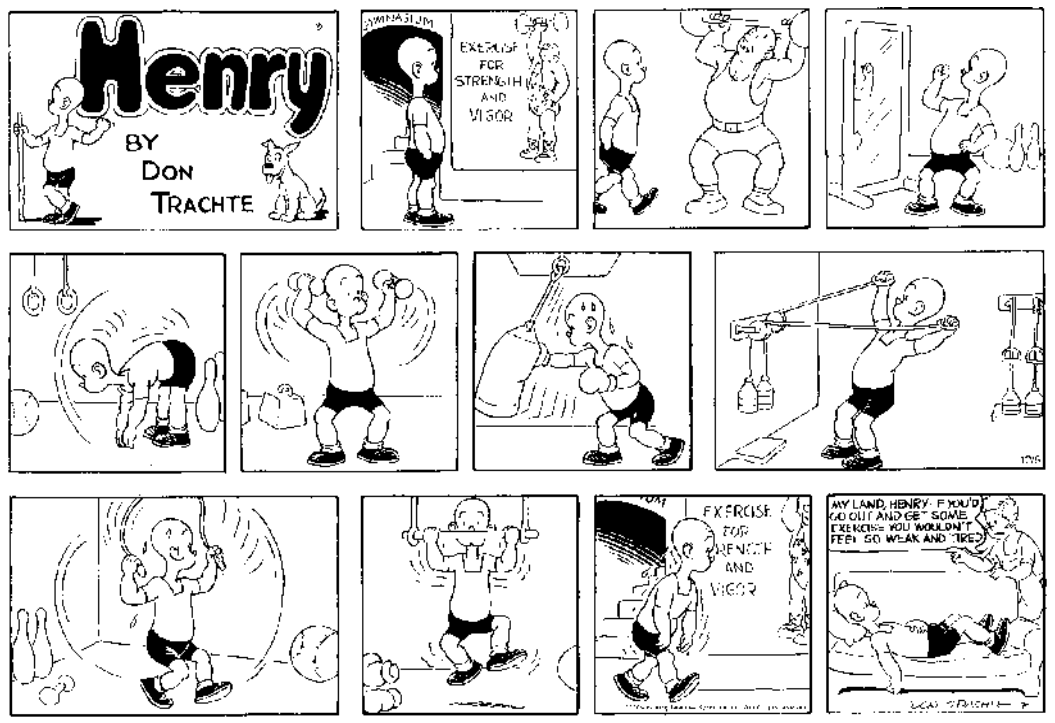
Amber Waves — by Dave T. Phipps


YOU SEE THAT PHOTO? THAT IS YOUR GRANDPA WHEN HE WAS A BOY.
WHY IS THIS PHOTO BLACK AND WHITE?
WELL, THAT'S BEFORE THEY HAD COLOR, SON.
TEACHER, MY GRANDPA WAS BORN BEFORE COLOR WAS INVENTED!

The Spats — by Jeff Pickering

They'll Do It Every Time — by Al Scaduto


J'EVER NOTICE? THE TROUBLE WITH THOSE CHILD-RESISTANT PILL BOTTLES...
...IS GROWN-UPS CAN'T OPEN THEM-- @!.X?#!!%!!
OH, DADDY-- WHAT YOU SAID--
Thanx to L. MACHIN, WASHINGTON, D.C.
HOSPITAL TYPE NO. 1,753-- THE VISITING GAL PAL WHO MAKES HER VISIT PAY OFF---
I DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO GET YOU ANYTHING--MIND IF I HAVE ONE OF YOUR ORANGES? OH--IS IT OKAY TO BORROW THIS BOOK? AH-H-H--CHOCOLATES--YUM--
Thanx to W. KREGEL, ATLANTA, GA.
EVER HAPPEN TO YOU? YOU HAVE AN OL' COLLEGE BUDDY COME TO VISIT AND REMINISCE ABOUT THE OLD CAREFREE SCHOOL DAYS BUT--
WE KNOW YOU TWO OL' PALS HAVE LOTS TO TALK OVER, SO GIZELLA AND I WILL RUN INTO TOWN TO DO A LITTLE SHOPPING AND LEAVE YOU GUYS ALONE--'BYE...
Thanx to G. REYNOLDS, PORTLAND, ORE.


Henry
BY DON TRACHTE
EXERCISE FOR STRENGTH AND VIGOR
EXERCISE FOR BENEFIT AND VIGOR
MY LAND, HENRY- IF YOU'D GO OUT AND GET SOME EXERCISE YOU WOULDN'T FEEL SO WEAK AND TIRED!

CLASSIFIED ADS

CLASSIFIEDS RATES AND POLICIES

Saipan Tribune's Classifieds Section gives you the right exposure without hurting your pockets. Stretch your dollar and get results.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 7-day run on both print and online edition, for as low as $25 per 3 liner ad for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of below packages that fits your budget.

ADS (7DAYS)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
• 3-Liner	$25
• 5-Liner	$35
• 3-Liner with picture	$45
• 5-Liner with picture	$55

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Saturday Issue:
- *Saipan Tribune:* All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on Monday issue.

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

FOR SALE

Very low mileage, clean and well maintained vehicles!
(1) 1997 Toyota T100 Pick-Up $5,300.00
(2) 2004 Ford Explorer XLT SUV..... $10,900.00 each
For more information, please call 322-2222

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO WITHDRAW AND NOTICE OF APPLICATION TO WITHRAW

Following a strategic review of our business in the region, notice is being given that MITSUI SUMITOMO INSURANCE CO., LTD. intends to withdraw from the insurance business in the CNMI. Pursuant to 20 NMIAC § 20-40.1-210, an application for an Order permitting withdrawal from the insurance business in the CNMI has been filed with the Office of the Insurance Commissioner, Department of Commerce, CNMI.

All persons interested in this matter should contact Rodney J. Rankin, Aon Insurance Micronesia (Saipan), Inc. as General Agent for Mitsui Sumitom Insurance Co., Ltd., P.O. Box 502177, Garapan, Saipan, MP 96950 or (670) 234-2811.

Mitsui Sumitomo Insurance Co., Ltd.

FOR RENT - RESIDENTIAL

Fina Sisu Apt., 2-BR, 1-BTH, FF, AC, BU Genset/ 24-hr water, security, laundry room, free Wi-Fi & ample parking. Right behind NMC campus. MIHA applicants accepted. Special rates for NMC faculty/ students. Call 235-6527/8 or 285-1317 for info.

WHATZIT Solution: Two-time loser

PUBLIC NOTICE

Ms. Li Fen who is currently working for Amy International Corp. under Permit # 299865 needs to report for work within 3 days, after this notice is published. Failure to do so will result to Termination.

FOR RENT - RESIDENTIAL

For Rent: 3 Bedroom House
Fully Furnished. In Tottotville, Koblerville. Please call 234-5459

FOR SALE

Pigs for Sale
Good for lechon ($2.50/lb.)
Please call 287-4568

Have a Merry Christmas
PLANT A YELLOW FLAME TREE
3-6ft $20.00–$30.00
Call 322-5691•285-6626

QQ RENT A CAR
Starting as low as... $25.00
Call: 233-9889 or 483-8866
$100 Security Deposit Required
Please visit QQ Store Garapan (2nd Road behind Fire Station)

WHATZIT™

Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.

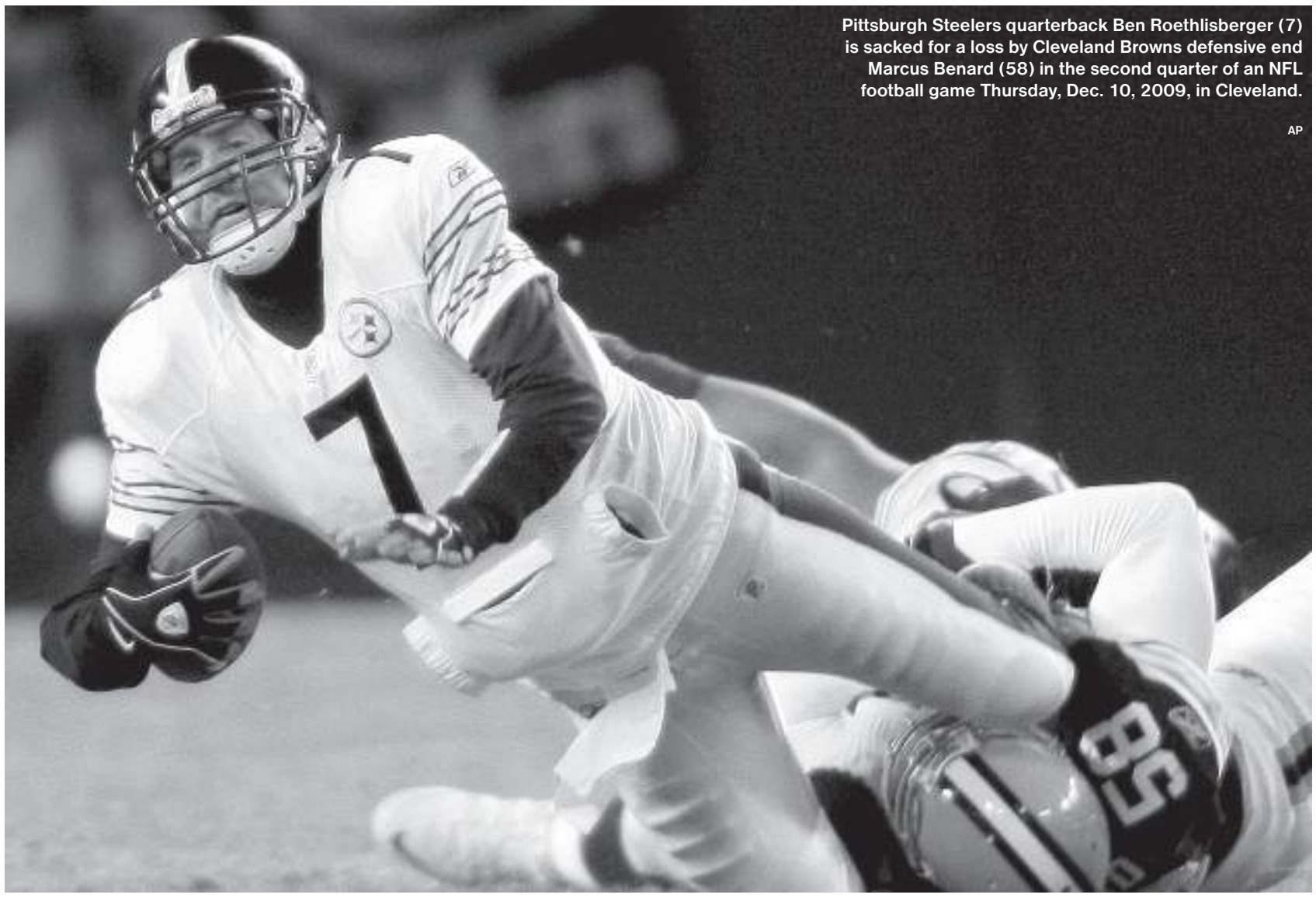
LOSER

©2009 Vol WHATZIT? is a trademark of Tribune Media Services, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Distributed by Universal Press Syndicate

Find today's solution in this section

Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Fitial says decision to end Aggreko 'far from certain'
CUC emergency extended anew
'CUC unlikely to meet EPA deadlines'
9 percent drop in foreign investors
INSIDE
Spor
Schuler in
Subscribe to the CNMI's First Daily Newspaper
235- NEWS

Browns sack Super Bowl champs Steelers



Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger (7) is sacked for a loss by Cleveland Browns defensive end Marcus Benard (58) in the second quarter of an NFL football game Thursday, Dec. 10, 2009, in Cleveland.

AP

CLEVELAND (AP)—There's nothing Super about the Pittsburgh Steelers anymore.

The defending NFL champions lost their fifth straight and had their playoff hopes thrown for a loss by the lowly Cleveland Browns, who ended a 12-game skid against their bitter rival by beating the Steelers 13-6 on Thursday night in subzero wind chills.

Ben Roethlisberger was sacked eight times and lost for the first time in 11 career games against the Browns (2-11), who extended Pittsburgh's longest losing streak in six years and defeated the Steelers (6-7) at home for the first time since 2000.

Pittsburgh is going to need help to make the playoffs, a stunning freefall for a team that hit the season's halfway point at 6-2.

Unexpected losses to Kansas City, Oakland and Cleveland—three of the NFL's worst teams with a combined record of 9-28—have pushed the Steelers to the brink.

"To lose five straight coming off a Super Bowl from last year is embarrassing," wide receiver Hines Ward said. "There's nothing fun about losing games, especially five in a row. We're better than that. We should play better than that. With three games left, you're going to see who really wants to go out here and play for the pride of this organization and this city and who doesn't want to be around here."

Chris Jennings, who began the season on Cleveland's practice squad, scored on a 10-yard run and Phil Dawson kicked a pair of 29-yard field goals for the Browns, who snapped a seven-game losing streak, a 10-game slide at home and beat the Steelers for just the second time in 20 games.

Roethlisberger tried to rally the Steelers, but his fourth-down pass to Santonio Holmes with less than two minutes left was knocked down by linebacker David Bowens.

When Holmes was tackled on a punt return and the final second ticked off the scoreboard's clock, frozen Browns fans, who were nearly outnumbered by Terrible Towel-waving Pittsburgh fans, danced in the aisles. Several Cleveland players sprinted down field and jumped into the Dawg Pound section to celebrate.

"It means everything," Browns do-it-all wide receiver Josh Cribbs said. "There are a lot of Steelers fans around the city so I hope people go to work and kick those Steelers fans."

The Steelers, whose defense lost some of its spirit and much of its toughness when Pro Bowl safety Troy Polamalu went down with a knee injury, left the field stunned.

"Hurtful," Holmes said. "I never thought I'd be losing five games in a row. I know those guys will continue to fight these last three games. Hopefully, we can get back in the lab this summer, regroup and start all over."

The win was just the second for Cleveland's embattled first-year coach Eric Mangini, who certainly helped his job security by beating Pittsburgh, something no Browns coach had done since Chris Palmer nine years ago.

Cribbs rushed for 87 yards out of the wildcat formation, had 104 return yards and caught one pass for 9 yards. He picked up a big first down on a 14-yard run in the fourth quarter when the Browns were trying to milk the clock.

Afterward, Cribbs soaked in his biggest win since turning pro. He knew the Steelers' 2 1/2-hour bus trip to Pennsylvania would not be pleasant.

"They're going to hear that bus' engine all the way back," Cribbs said. "That's a lonely ride. I've ridden that ride for five years now. It's time for them to hear that engine all the way home while they look at the stat sheet."

Needing a touchdown to tie, the Steelers got the ball back with 6:16 left at their own 21. Roethlisberger, who has broken Cleveland's hearts before, began working his team down field with short passes. But he was sacked at midfield in the final two minutes and had his final pass batted away.

Brady Quinn, making his first career start against Pittsburgh, completed just one pass in the second half and finished 6 of 19 for 90 yards.

Roethlisberger went 18 of 32 for 201 yards. He had trouble throwing in the swirling winds that consistently blew over 20 mph and the Steelers were never able to establish their running game against the Browns' defense, which came in ranked 32nd overall.

Cleveland's defense dominated the first half, sacking Roethlisberger five times and pressuring him on nearly every snap.

Jennings' 10-yard scamper around right end - the first TD scored by a Cleveland running back in more than a year—put the Browns up 13-0 late in the second quarter. With their defense stuffing the Steelers and the temperature dropping, the Browns' lead seemed insurmountable.

But the Steelers drove 58 yards in 41 seconds and got a 27-yard field goal from Jeff Reed as time expired to close to 13-3 at halftime.

Reed's second field goal with 8 seconds left in the third brought the Steelers within a touchdown.

But Pittsburgh was unable to put together a scoring drive in the fourth, and now the Steelers find themselves in more trouble than they could have imagined.

This is certainly not what Pittsburgh coach Mike Tomlin had in mind when he promised his team would "unleash hell" in December.

"We've found new and different ways to not rise up at critical moments and we're losing football games because of it," Tomlin said. "This one happened in all three phases."

Meetings over, teams and players wait each other out

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—As general managers headed out the hotel doors and into the bone-chilling air, most had much work to do. Only the New York Yankees, Houston, Texas and Milwaukee accomplished a lot this week during the winter meetings.

The top three free agents—John Lackey, Matt Holliday and Jason Bay—remained unsigned. Toronto ace Roy Halladay was still being shopped.

With two weeks left until the holiday break, agents and teams figure to try to wear each other down. Some premier players may not know their spring training destination until January.

Essentially, teams are acting as if they were shoppers waiting for price drops. Why pay full price when markdowns might be coming soon, especially for position players?

"You can turn left, you can right, you can look up and down and you've got a DH sitting right there begging for a job," Yankees general manager Brian Cashman said.

Some players seem to be waiting to find out where the Yankees will bid for them. The big-market teams are holding back, and the small-market clubs are hunting for bargains.

"I've kind of been programmed since Day 1 here not to use those words: 'small market.' But the facts of it are that's what we are," Kansas City manager Trey Hillman said. "We have to get a surplus developed within our own system to be able to fund it ourselves."

On the last day of the meetings, the New York Mets made offers to Bay and free-agent catcher Bengie Molina. Their bid for Bay, a slugger who could fill the team's void in left field, was between $60 million and $65 million over four years.

The Los Angeles Dodgers were a major story at the meetings—for what they didn't do. Seemingly paralyzed by owners tangled up in a divorce, the Dodgers don't appear to be involved in any big-money moves, removing one of the traditional market makers.

The World Series champion Yankees obtained All-Star center fielder Curtis Granderson in the only major trade of the meetings, a three-team, seven-player swap that also included Detroit and Arizona. New York also kept pitcher Andy Pettitte with an $11.75 million, one-year deal.

Houston bolstered its bullpen by acquiring Matt Lindstrom in a trade with Florida, reached a preliminary agreement with reliever Brandon Lyon on a $15 million, three-year contract and agreed to a $4.5 million, one-year deal with third baseman Pedro Feliz.

Milwaukee also raced to add arms, striking preliminary deals with starter Randy Wolf ($29.75 million over three years) and reliever LaTroy Hawkins ($7.5 million over two seasons).

The cash-strapped Rangers, in the process of being sold, created some flexibility by shipping pitcher Kevin Millwood and $3 million (to cover part of his $12 million salary) to Baltimore for reliever Chris Ray. Texas then agreed to a $7.5 million, one-year deal with oft-injured right-hander Rich Harden.

As the meetings wound down, Texas and Boston were discussing a trade that would send 2007 World Series MVP Mike Lowell to the Rangers.

The 35-year-old was an All-Star four times from 2002-07, hitting .324 with 21 homers and 120 RBIs in 2007. But he slumped to 73 RBIs in 2008 and 75 RBIs this year, hitting 17 homers each season. He was slowed by surgery in October 2008 to repair a torn labrum in his right hip and remove a bone spur on a thigh bone.

He is owed $12 million in 2010, the final season of a $37.5 million, three-year contract. Rangers general manager Jon Daniels said the teams still are discussing the trade, which also would be subject to physicals. Boston would have to give Texas money to offset a portion of Lowell's salary.

"Both clubs are evaluating. I think the general parameters are understood and both clubs need to decide whether it's the right fit," he said.

Surprised that Rafael Soriano accepted salary arbitration, Atlanta was close to sending the reliever to Tampa Bay for pitcher Jesse Chavez. The teams were waiting for the medical reports to be approved, and Soriano seemed set to approve the trade—a necessary component.

The right-hander had 27 saves last season for the Braves, who signed free-agent relievers Billy Wagner and Takashi Saito—making Soriano redundant.

Williams scores 32 points, Jazz beat Magic

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—Deron Williams scored 21 of his 32 points in the second half and had 15 assists and eight rebounds, leading the Utah Jazz to a 120-111 victory over Orlando on Thursday night that snapped Magic's six-game winning streak.

Carlos Boozer had 20 points and 14 rebounds, and C.J. Miles added a season-high 22 points for the Jazz, coming off an embarrassing loss in Los Angeles the night before when they scored just six points in the fourth quarter against the Lakers.

The Jazz survived a dreadful first half from the foul line and took control in the third quarter, outscoring the Magic 38-21.

Vince Carter had 34 points to lead the Magic, who had won eight straight road games.

Mehmet Okur added 14 points and 11 rebounds for Utah despite getting into early foul trouble by blanketing Orlando's Dwight Howard.

Okur's defense flustered Howard, who finished with 18 points and 10 rebounds—just an average night after opening the game with 10 points and seven rebounds in the first half.

Utah Jazz guard Deron Williams (8) puts up a shot during the second half of their NBA basketball game against the Orlando Magic Thursday, Dec. 10, 2009, in Salt Lake City.

AP

Matt Barnes added 17 points and Ryan Anderson scored 16, making four 3-pointers while leading the Magic to an 18-point lead in the first half.

Utah helped Orlando pull ahead by making just 10 of 22 foul shots in the first half. Having little to fear by sending the Jazz to the line, the Magic racked up 13 fouls in the first half.

But the Jazz got within eight at halftime, then opened the third quarter on a 14-3 run and the Magic never recovered.

The Jazz came out with a bit of a mean streak after halftime, shutting down the freewheeling fun the Magic enjoyed in the first half with a physical game that was much more Utah's style. Williams had 11 points and eight assists in the period and ended it on a 3-pointer with one second left that gave the Jazz a 90-81 lead.

Howard had opened the third with two foul shots to put the Magic up 62-52, then Utah scored the next 10 points. Okur started it with a hook, Wesley Matthews broke for a layup off a pass from Williams, then Boozer and Brewer closed the game with back-to-back dunks that got the crowd in a frenzy. Williams assisted on both dunks and Brewer had a steal during the string of 10 straight points.

Okur made two foul shots to tie it at 62 with 8:35 left in the third. It was the first time in the game the Jazz went 2 for 2 from the line.

The Magic continued to struggle in the fourth and went without a field goal until Rashard Lewis hit a 3-pointer with 7:41 left in the game. That got Orlando to 97-89, but the Jazz scored with the next eight points.

Williams took a forearm to the back of the head from Howard during the run and gave the Jazz a scare when he stayed on the court for a few moments before getting helped up, then making both foul shots.

Pistons 101, Nuggets 99

In Auburn Hills, Michigan, Detroit held on to beat Denver when former Pistons star Chauncey Billups missed a layup in the final seconds.

Charlie Villanueva scored 27 points, and Rodney Stuckey had 26 to help Detroit run its winning streak to a season-best four games.

Carmelo Anthony scored 40 points for Denver.

Celtics 104, Wizards 102

In Washington, Rajon Rondo's driving dunk with a minute remaining gave Boston its ninth straight victory, edging Washington.

Rondo had 21 points and 11 assists, and Ray Allen had 18 and became the 32nd NBA player to score 20,000 points.

Gilbert Arenas led Washington with 25 points, but missed a pair of free throws with 27 seconds to play.

Golfers say they weren't interviewed about Woods

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (AP)—Two golfers quoted by a weekly magazine as making disparaging remarks about Tiger Woods and his marriage said Thursday night they never spoke to the publication.

In a story that Life & Style posted on its Web site, Ben Crane is quoted as saying Woods is a "phony and a fake" and that Woods' wife knew about allegations of extramarital affairs. It also quotes Charles Warren as saying Woods' wife "had stars in her eyes and maybe dollar signs too" and should leave him.

The magazine said in a statement it was investigating.

"This is unbelievable," Ben Crane told The Associated Press from his Dallas-area home. "I never said a word about anything. They print this and put my name next to it."

Warren said through his agent that he has not given an interview of any kind in two months.

"I have not spoken to Life & Style magazine, so there is no story here," Warren said in a statement.

Crane's agent, Tommy Limbaugh of 4UManagement, said a magazine official told him the interview took place at the PGA Tour Qualifying tournament last week at Bear Lakes Country Club in West Palm Beach, Fla.

Crane finished 51st on the PGA Tour money list this year and was not at Q-school. Warren, who finished 147th on the money list, withdrew from Q-school before the final round. He was too far back to earn his card.

"We sent an experienced freelance reporter to a golf tournament attended by several PGA pros," the magazine said in a statement. "Our reporter spoke with two golfers who presented themselves as Ben Crane and Charles Warren. We are taking these claims very seriously and investigating further."

AP

In this Tuesday, Nov. 10, 2009 file photo, Tiger Woods from the U.S. smiles during a press conference before the Australian Masters golf tournament at Kingston Heath Golf Club, in Melbourne, Australia.

Asked if the magazine took photos of the golfers it interviewed, a spokeswoman declined further comment. Life & Style published the quotes Wednesday afternoon, and several Web sites posted them Thursday.

Crane said he first learned about the quotes Thursday morning when his agent called.

"At that point, I was like, 'OK, that's the farthest thing from the truth,'" Crane said. "I didn't realize I should be proactively calling you and (other journalists) until all of a sudden the tour called and said they wanted to run it (on television)."

Nicklaus wants to respect Woods' privacy

PALM BEACH GARDENS, Fla. (AP)—Jack Nicklaus said the fallout over Tiger Woods' car crash and allegations of extramarital affairs is "none of my business."

"Our public is pretty forgiving at times," Nicklaus said Thursday. "Time usually heals all wounds. I think the hardest thing is obviously his family. That's a private matter for him and his family."

Nicklaus won 18 major championships, the most in golf history. Woods is second with 14.

Woods has remained out of the public eye since the crash Thanksgiving weekend and the scandal that quickly followed. He has acknowledged "transgressions" on his Web site.

"He's a great athlete," Nicklaus said. "He'll figure it out."

Nicklaus' first public comments about Woods' situation came after an event honoring The Benjamin School's golf team, recent winners of a Florida state championship. Son Gary Nicklaus played on a state title team at the school 26 years ago.

Refs spokesman criticizes Donaghy, alleges threats

NEW YORK (AP)—The lead negotiator and spokesman for the NBA's referees says Tim Donaghy made threats against him, and that the disgraced former official's accusations about his colleagues shouldn't be believed because he is a "compulsive liar."

Lamell McMorris said Thursday that Donaghy also threatened fellow referees, whom he has accused of misconduct during a series of interviews this week.

"His attacks have been malicious and his claims continue to be unfounded," McMorris said in a statement. "Donaghy is a convicted felon and a compulsive liar with loyalty to no one but himself."

McMorris declined to give specifics of the threats, but indicated to The Associated Press they came when Donaghy called his office after McMorris put out statements on behalf of the referees after the Donaghy betting scandal broke in 2007.

McMorris also cited Donaghy's "pattern of intimidation" and issues with his temper, including a dispute with his neighbors while living in Philadelphia that the NBA investigated. His statement said Donaghy's life "has been marked by a pattern of dishonesty," noting that he was forced to return to prison after he was accused of violating terms of his probation.

This was a difficult week for the referees union, with Donaghy appearing on "60 Minutes" and ESPN to give interviews to coincide with the release of his book. Donaghy insisted he never had to make calls to affect games he bet on because he knew of biases certain officials had against certain players that would influence the way the games would be called.

But McMorris said investigations into those claims found no criminal activity by anyone other than Donaghy, who admitted betting on games he officiated and was sentenced to 15 months for conspiracy to engage in wire fraud and transmitting betting information through interstate commerce.

"The release of his new book and his various media interviews are more attempts by Tim Donaghy to cast a shadow over the NBA," McMorris said.

McGrady on pace to start in NBA All-Star game

NEW YORK (AP)—Kobe Bryant is the leading vote-getter for the NBA All-Star game and Tracy McGrady is on track to start beside him in the Western Conference backcourt despite not playing yet this season.

Bryant had more than 692,000 votes in the first set of returns announced Thursday, about 20,000 more than East leader Dwyane Wade. Also on track to start for the West are NBA leading scorer Carmelo Anthony and Dirk Nowitzki at forwards, and Amare Stoudemire at center.

McGrady is nearing a return from microfracture knee surgery, but leads Steve Nash by more than 9,000 votes for the West's second guard spot. McGrady likely is benefiting from his popularity in China as Yao Ming's longtime teammate in Houston.

LeBron James and Kevin Garnett lead at the East forward position, Dwight Howard has a huge advantage over Shaquille O'Neal, and his Orlando teammate Vince Carter is second among guards.

The All-Star game is Feb. 14 at Cowboys Stadium in Arlington, Texas. Starters will be announced Jan. 21 and reserves will be chosen a week later.

NMIVA targets 18 teams for grass tournament

Two-person volleyball action will shift from sand to grass today when Northern Mariana Islands Volleyball Association holds the 3rd Annual Reverse Co-ed Grass Volleyball Tournament at Navy Hill's baseball field.

NMIVA just concluded the four-person beach volleyball fall league at the Pacific Islands Club sand court on Thursday and will have its last tournament of the season today.

The weekend tournament, which is being supported by Hyatt Regency Saipan, IT&E, and Pacific Trading Co., is a unique one as it is played on a female's height net and male participants cannot go for a spike inside the 10-foot line and are prohibited from blocking the ball.

NMIVA is expecting 18 teams to join the one-day event, which will run from 9am onwards. Registration will start at 8am. Entrance fee is $10 per person for NMIVA members and $15 for non-NMIVA members. Cash prizes and other gifts from IT&E, PTC, and Hyatt Regency will be given to winners.

Last year, the tandem of Bruce Berline and Melody Matson bested seven other pairs in the playoffs to win the championship.

Berline and Matson needed two extra points to beat the duo of Mili Saiki and Russ Quinn in the finals, 24-22.

Sixteen teams joined last year's reverse co-ed tournament with squads divided into four pools and each pool played in a round-robin format. The top two teams then advanced to the winner's group in the playoffs, while the last two dropped to the loser's bracket and must not lose again to avoid elimination.

Joining the pairs of Berline-Matson and Saiki-Quinn in the playoffs were the tandems of Angie-Tyce Mister, Jeff Elliot-Louise Oakley, Laurie Peterka-Randy Steele, Rob Epley-Melissa Halaby, Dale Roberts-Heather Kennedy, and Linda Anastacio-Mark McDonald.

Matson and Berline notched the first finals ticket after beating Steele and Peterka, 15-12, and Quinn and Saiki, 15-13.

The pairs of Quinn/Saiki and Steele/Peterka dropped to the losers' bracket and defeated separates foes to set up their duel for the last finals berth. Quinn and Saiki then prevailed in the rubber-match, 15-13. ***(Roselyn B. Monroyo).***

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	18	4	.818	–
Toronto	10	14	.417	9
New York	7	15	.318	11
Philadelphia	5	17	.227	13
New Jersey	2	20	.091	16

Southeast Division

Orlando	17	5	.773	–
Atlanta	15	6	.714	1 1/2
Miami	11	9	.550	5
Charlotte	9	11	.450	7
Washington	7	13	.350	9

Central Division

Cleveland	15	7	.682	–
Milwaukee	10	11	.476	4 1/2
Detroit	10	12	.455	5
Chicago	7	13	.350	7
Indiana	6	13	.316	7 1/2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

Dallas	15	7	.682	–
Houston	12	9	.571	2 1/2
San Antonio	10	9	.526	3 1/2
New Orleans	10	11	.476	4 1/2
Memphis	9	12	.429	5 1/2

Northwest Division

Denver	16	7	.696	–
Portland	14	9	.609	2
Utah	13	9	.591	2 1/2
Oklahoma City	11	9	.550	3 1/2
Minnesota	3	19	.136	12 1/2

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	17	3	.850	–
Phoenix	15	7	.682	3
L.A. Clippers	9	12	.429	8 1/2
Sacramento	9	12	.429	8 1/2
Golden State	7	14	.333	10 1/2

Yesterday's Games

Detroit 101, Denver 99
Boston 104, Washington 102
Utah 120, Orlando 111

NFL STANDINGS

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
New England	7	5	0	.583	328	224
Miami	6	6	0	.500	278	296
N.Y. Jets	6	6	0	.500	249	208
Buffalo	4	8	0	.333	199	261

South

x-Indianapolis	12	0	0	1.000	331	201
Jacksonville	7	5	0	.583	225	273
Tennessee	5	7	0	.417	246	316
Houston	5	7	0	.417	277	266

North

Cincinnati	9	3	0	.750	254	187
Baltimore	6	6	0	.500	271	215
Pittsburgh	6	7	0	.462	278	244
Cleveland	2	11	0	.154	158	315

West

San Diego	9	3	0	.750	342	242
Denver	8	4	0	.667	240	202
Oakland	4	8	0	.333	142	282
Kansas City	3	9	0	.250	196	326

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East

Dallas	8	4	0	.667	279	213
Philadelphia	8	4	0	.667	327	235
N.Y. Giants	7	5	0	.583	303	285
Washington	3	9	0	.250	200	238

South

x-New Orleans	12	0	0	1.000	440	251
Atlanta	6	6	0	.500	279	279
Carolina	5	7	0	.417	215	262
Tampa Bay	1	11	0	.083	187	330

North

Minnesota	10	2	0	.833	359	233
Green Bay	8	4	0	.667	323	229
Chicago	5	7	0	.417	233	270
Detroit	2	10	0	.167	206	358

West

Arizona	8	4	0	.667	297	234
San Francisco	5	7	0	.417	245	233
Seattle	5	7	0	.417	243	267
St. Louis	1	11	0	.083	139	314

x-clinched division

Yesterday's Game

Cleveland 13, Pittsburgh 6

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOCAL SCORES

NMIFA U18 STANDINGS

Girls Division

	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts
Matansa FC	2	0	0	6	0	6	6
Paire FC	1	0	1	4	2	2	3
MP United FC	0	0	2	0	8	-8	0

Boys Division

MP United FC	3	0	0	16	3	+13	9
Paire FC	1	1	1	11	9	+2	4
Independent FC	1	1	1	5	4	1	4
Matansa FC	0	0	3	3	19	-16	0

PILCOWA STANDINGS

Open

Diamond	4	1
Saipan Fresh	3	3
Noni Saipan	3	2
IT&E	2	3
NCIC	0	4

Masters

Ebisuya	4	1
University of Loyola	4	1
Wushin	2	2
GEC	1	3
Cool Water	1	4

NONI

From Page 28

and IT&E first played their rain-halted overtime game in the first round of the playoffs before starting the second round with the former escaping with a 99-97 triumph.

Noni made it two in a row after IT&E collapsed in the last 40 seconds of the fourth quarter, committing errors and missing crucial shots.

IT&E had the lead for the last time at the 89-87 count after Cadagat pulled up for a fadeaway triple and still made the shot despite dropping to the floor as he was slightly bumped by Basila.

Bon Tamayo, who missed all his attempts in the first three quarters, countered with his own triple, his second in the fourth quarter alone, to put Noni ahead, 90-89, 54 seconds left in the game.

IT&E muffed an offensive set, paving the way for a Noni fastbreak play. However, Wowie Abuel failed to complete the attack, as he fumbled and was called for a traveling violation, returning possession to IT&E.

With 40 seconds left, IT&E made a sideline inbound with Quincy Johnson receiving the pass and making an error. Johnson was trying to give the ball to Cadagat, but Noni defenders were sagging on the latter and the leather fell into the wrong hands.

Johnson gave up a preemptive foul on Basila, who was trying to dribble toward Noni's frontcourt. Basila then calmy sank two free throws to give Noni more distance, 92-89, with 29 seconds left in the game.

Instead of going for a quick two, Cadagat opted for long triple and missed badly. Basila grabbed the rebound, drew another foul, and put the dagger on IT&E's heart with two more free throw conversions.

The win improved Noni's record to 3-2, while IT&E dropped to a 2-3 mark.

Kae Bernardo paced Noni with 22 points, while Sonny Lerio and Abuel chipped in 16. Tamayo tallied 13, making all of them in the fourth period after a lackluster showing in the first three quarters.

Cadagat led IT&E with 29 markers and could have scored more if he did not sit out for about six minutes in the final canto. Cadagat cramped up at the start of the fourth period and was given another chance to show his fancy moves only in the last three minutes of the game when IT&E and Noni were in a neck-and-neck battle.

Wushin 97, Ebisuya 93

In the Masters division, Wushin handed Ebisuya its first loss of the season after pulling off a 97-93 victory.

Wushin leaned on a balanced offense attack to break Ebisuya's winning streak, as the former drew points from all 12 players it fielded in the game.

Wushin had five players scoring in double figures with Jojo Garon leading the way with 18 points. Edel Carino and Sonny Ebuen fired 16 each, while Danny Dayrit and Ferdie Tobias made 13 apiece.

The win snapped Wushin's two-game losing skid and put the team in second place. The loss dropped Ebisuya to a share of first place with University of Loyola as they now have identical 4-1 records.

Masters

Wushin 97 – Garon 18, Carino 16, Ebuen 16, Tobias 13, Trajano 8, Samson 4, Villasan 4, Echavez 2, De Jesus 2, Leong 2, Alvarez 1.

Ebisuya 93 – Rebuyon 21, Fernandez 16, Santos 13, Abedes 12, Moises 12, Olivos 6, Viola 4, Tengco3, Casabuena 3.

Scoring by quarters: 28-21, 42-44, 71-69, 97-93.

Open

Noni Saipan 94 – Bernardo 22, Lerio 16, Abuel 16, Tamayo 13, De Vero 12, Basila 7, Aquino 4, Pantaleon 2.

IT&E 89 – Cadagat 29, Johnson 17, Mendiola 16, Pagarao 10, Itaas 6, Lauron 6, Moises 5.

Scoring by quarters: 22-16, 45-41, 68-69, 94-89.

MP UNITED

From Page 28

The win was MP United's third in as many games, strengthening the team's hold to the No. 1 spot. After three matches, MP United has earned nine points and scored 16 goals, while allowing only three goals to its foes.

Dai Xiang Liang is the leading goal scorer for MP United with six, while Bo Barry and Dae Min Jeon has tallied four and two goals, respectively, after three games. Stacy Macaranas, Bradley Brostrom, and Max Han have contributed one goal apiece for MP United.

Matansa has yet to win after three matches and thus remained at the bottom of the team standings. Matansa has scored three goals after three assignments—two were courtesy of Vince Cepeda and one from Eugene Cruz.

Paire 1, Independents 1

In the other boys U18 game, Paire and Independents engaged in a 1-1 draw.

It was Paire's first draw and the team now holds a 1-1-1 win-draw-loss record and has gained four points. Independents has the same record, but fell to third place as it has lesser goals in three games with five compared to Paire's 11.

Paire had 11 different players finding the back of the net once, while Independents scorers include Keoni Borja, Ii Ho Kim, Joe Palacios, Yong Park, and Delbert Aguon.

GIRLS

Matansa 2, Paire 0

In the lone game in the girls U18, Matansa stunned division favorite Paire, 2-0.

The victory put Matansa in the lead, as it has gained six points after two games. Paire dropped to a 1-0-1 mark for second place. MP United completes the girls U18 cast and has a 0-0-2 record.

Matansa has nailed six goals in two games, drawing one each from Andrea Camacho, Jacque Wonenberg, Doreen Ravell, Oaila Race, Jace Pineda, and Madison Smith.

Paire's Stephanie Camacho is so far the lone female player to score two goals this season while her teammates, Zoe Jewell and Samantha Babauta, has made one apiece.

DALLAS

From Page 28

leaves the MGM Grand hotel arena in Las Vegas as the heavy favorite to host the March 13 fight.

Co-promoter Bob Arum—who got the news at his 78th birthday party Tuesday night—was upset by the trip being canceled because Jones had rearranged his schedule so he could give the promoters a tour of the $1.2 billion stadium and present a proposal to host the bout.

"I'm just embarrassed, really embarrassed," Arum told The Associated Press. "The man (Jones) changed his whole schedule for this and you certainly want to listen to the man."

Arum said he was blindsided by Mayweather's promoter, Golden Boy CEO Richard Schaefer, who was to join him in Dallas along with HBO Sports president Ross Greenburg. He said Schaefer called him and told him he wasn't going to go to Dallas because he didn't want the fight there.

"There was no point in me going then," Arum said. "My guy can't go into the ring and just take bows. He needs an opponent."

Arum said Schaefer told him that he didn't want to stage the fight in an outdoor stadium, and that there wasn't enough time to set up the stadium for the bout.

"I told him it wasn't an outdoor stadium, that it had a retractable roof," Arum said. "That didn't seem to matter."

The abrupt cancellation was the first problem between the two promoters, who earlier had quickly come to agreement on the date of the fight and the purses for their respective fighters. Things were going so smoothly that they were looking for sites for a Jan. 6 press conference in New York City to formally announce the bout.

Schaefer could not immediately be reached for comment. He and Arum earlier agreed not to publicly speak about the negotiations until all arrangements for the fight were complete.

ANGAMWAS

From Page 28

for it, all she got were sand as the ball had already landed.

Angamwas and Pwipwise arranged their title tiff after downing Shogunai and Random Radicals in the semifinals, respectively. Before the semifinals, eight teams played in the first round of the playoffs.

Shogunai was paired against Chewnutt Crew and won, 21-16, Angamwas beat Make It Bali, 21-15, Pwipwise topped Git It, 21-7, and Random Radical defeated O-No, 21-10.

Angamwas was seeded first in the first round of the playoffs with its 9-2 record. Three more teams, Pwipwise, Randon Radicals, and Chewnutt Crew, also finished with a 9-2 record, but lost in the tiebreak (based on sets won). Angamwas won 26 sets, Pwipwise had 25, Random Radicals rallied 23, and Chewnutt Crew recorded 21.

Shogunai finished fifth with an 8-3 record, followed by O-No (5-6), Git It (5-6), and Make It Bali (4-70. Failing to advance to the playoffs were Special Delivery (4-7), Just Do It (2-9), Fisingan (2-9), and Manta Diver (0-11).

Browns sack Super Bowl champs Steelers

There's nothing Super about the Pittsburgh Steelers anymore.

25

Saipan Tribune
Sports

NMIVA targets 18 teams for grass tournament

Two-person volleyball action will shift from sand to grass today when Northern Mariana Islands Volleyball Association holds the 3rd Annual Reverse Co-ed Grass Volleyball Tournament at Navy Hill's baseball field.

27

Angamwas rules 4-person beach v'ball tilt

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Angamwas capped its reign in the PIC/Miller/Gatorade/Monster-NMIFA 4-Person Co-Ed Beach Volleyball Fall League 2009 with a championship win over Pwipwise on Thursday night on the PIC sand court.

The pennant champion Angamwas recovered from an opening set loss to Pwipwise and swept the last two sets to win in the finals, 18-21, 21-19, 16-14.

Bruce Berline scored Angamwas last two points in the deciding third set, making a dink and an ace. Joining Berline on the champion team are Rex Jose, Kim Peterson, Linda Anastacio, Cleo Menign, Luther Taylor, and Adam Hardwicke.

The third set was a neck-and-neck battle with Pwipwise still in the lead midway in the deciding set behind the hits of brothers Youme and Larry Sharry. Good ball placements from Berline and Taylor turned the favor to Angamwas, 12-9.

Pwipwise sued for time after falling behind by three and managed to tie the game at 14-all after made Angamwas made errors and Larry Sharry connected on a couple of hits.

In the next play, Larry Sharry served and Jose received it, setting Berline near the net. Pwipwise defenders stepped back to the backline, anticipating Berline would go for a strong kill. However, Berline went for a soft dink and Josh Steven was already too late when he dove for the ball. Berline then served for match point with Pwipwise defenders again stepping back to the backline. However the ball landed just in the middle of Pwipwise's court and when Amber Sarkkinen reached out

See ANGAMWAS on Page 27

Members of Angamwas flash the No. 1 sign after beating Pwipwise in the finals of the four-person beach volleyball league on Thursday on the PIC sandcourt.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Noni delivers clutch wins over IT&E

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

PILIPINO CONTRACT WORKERS ASSOCIATION
PILCOWA, INC

Banjo Basila had no fancy moves, just a pair of steady hands which knocked down four important free throws that lifted Noni Saipan to a 94-89 win over IT&E in the 2009 PILCOWA Basketball League on Thursday at the JP Centre Basketball Court.

Basila went 4-for-4 from the foul line in the last 29 seconds to give Noni back-to-back victories on the same night. Noni

See NONI on Page 27

Noni Saipan's Bon Tamayo, right, loses his balance as he collides with IT&E's Peter Mendiola during their game in the PILCOWA caging on Thursday at the JP Centre Basketball Court.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

AP

Manny Pacquiao, of the Philippines, holds the championship belt at the finish of his WBO welterweight boxing title fight against Miguel Cotto, of Puerto Rico, in this Nov. 14, 2009 file photo, in Las Vegas.

MP United, Matansa still unbeaten

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Northern Mariana Islands Football Association

MP United Football Club was on target in the boys division of the 2009 NMIFA U18 Football Fall League, shutting out Matansa FC, 8-0, during their game last week at the Oleai Sports Complex Field.

See MP UNITED on Page 27

An Independents striker goes for a header, while a Paire defender looks on during their game in the 2009 NMIFA U18 Football Fall League last week at the Oleai Sports Complex Field.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Dallas stadium likely out for Pacquiao-Mayweather

BOXING

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Promoters of the Manny Pacquiao-Floyd Mayweather Jr. fight abruptly canceled a trip to Dallas on Wednesday, dealing a possibly fatal blow to the chances of Jerry Jones landing the bout for Cowboys Stadium.

The trip was canceled at the last minute because Mayweather's promoter apparently decided he didn't want the fight at the new stadium. The move

See DALLAS on Page 27